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THE HISTORY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Nature and Limits of the Task.

The established historian is usually content to view nought but the main stream of human events wherein man and movement together surge spectacularly onward in the untried channels of civilizations to fleeting fame or chaotic disturbance. It is thus that the embryonic observer of occurence has found his domaine in the comparative safety and complacency of the commonplace. He contents himself with the observation of a single aspect of the multiphased life process of mankind as it functions in a localized area during a fleeting instant of eternity. It is thus that the writer strives to present a survey of the growth and activity which has for almost a century and one-half characterized the institution of the Methodist Episcopal church as it has existed in the northwestern portion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

B. Definitions.

In behalf of explicitness the following factors warrant our attention. The territory of northwestern Pennsylvania is here adjudged as that portion of the Commonwealth in which the

administration of the affairs of the Methodist Episcopal church is affected by the Erie Annual conference of the said church.[1] Here it is to be observed that the history or present status of the Erie Annual Conference is somewhat different from the past activities or current condition of the Methodist Episcopal church in northwestern Pennsylvania. In the past the Erie conference has embraced portions of the states of Ohio and New York in addition to its territory in Pennsylvania and at present retains jurisdiction in the latter areas. To further facilitate clarity and brevity the terms "Methodist," "Methodism," "church," or "territory" when used hereafter without specification shall be construed as referring to the more complete terms contained in the thesis title.

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[1] This area is bounded by a line commencing on the north at that point where the eastern boundry of the state of Ohio meets Lake Erie. The said line thence runs east and north along the shore of said lake to the western boundry of the state of New York; thence south along this boundary to its southernmost point; thence east along the southern boundary of the state of New York to the Tunungwant creek; thence up said creek southward, excluding the city of Bradford on said creek, to the ridge dividing between the waters of Clarion and Sinnemahoning creek; thence southward to Mahoning Creek, thence down said creek to the Allegheny River, excluding Milton Society, but including the Valier Charge, the Putneyville Society in the Putneyville Circuit, Rimerton south of the Mahoning Creek, and that portion of the borough of Punxsutawney lying south and east of Mahoning Creek; thence across said river in a westerly direction to the southwest corner of Lawrence county, including wampum; then along the Ohio state line to the place of beginning, excluding the Orangeville church.

Within these bounds are the present-day counties of: Erie, Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, Warren, Forest, Venango, Clarion, and portions of McKean, Elk, Jefferson, and Butler.

C. Reasons for the Study.

Several factors have prompted the current inquiry. While the doings of Methodism in the area of the Erie Annual conference have been of such consequence to bear formal recording by two writers none have seen fit thus far to record separately the activities of the church in northwestern Pennsylvania. The writings dealing with the larger topic record only those events which are significant to the history of Methodism prior to 1905. Hence, little formal historical recording has taken place since the turn of the century. Furthermore, few of the General histories of American Methodism have seen fit to concern themselves with the events which occurred in this territory. Such as have made reference have confined the same to the year prior to 1850. The current year presents the possibility of events of great historical significance and of far-reaching consequence to the church at large. It is altogether probable that we stand on the threshhold of a new age. At such a point the writer is stimulated to look back and observe the life and progress of the church in this territory from the day of its introduction to the dawn of a new age in American Methodism.

Finally, the subject at hand is of unique value to the writer insofar as it allows him to become acquainted with the men, the movements and the events which have conditioned the

life, growth, and practice of the church in the territory where he hopes to spend his life.

D. The Approach to the Problem.

The nature of the subject and the vehicle of presentation, together with the limitations and position of the writer, demand that the task in hand be treated as a historical survey. Such an approach calls for more than the mere recording of isolated events in their proper sequence. Therefore, in addition to the observation of events of consequence, our attentions must be directed to a consideration of dominant movements, policies, and controversies which also have had a conditioning effect upon the church's history. Such a procedure may perhaps appear to savor of dryness. Such a conclusion is not necessarily valid for where occasion and space permit incidents of human interest will be included in the text.

E. Sources.

Circumstance and culture have so conspired as to leave in their wake an abundance of evidence relevant to the subject at hand. The Methodists have always been diligent recorders of events and within the past century have evidenced an aptitude for statistical compilation. It is thus that a great mass of primary and secondary source material is available for our

examination.

In the realm of primary source material the Minutes of the Annual Conferences are invaluable to our consideration of the earlier years of church administration in this area. Subsequent to 1836, however, they are of comparatively little value to us. The best single primary source of information is found in the Minutes of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The "Minutes" of the first twenty sessions were published in 1907 from the original manuscripts. Since 1856 the "Minutes" have been published annually. These are of value not only because they record the formal acts of church administration but also because they reflect the attitude of the church and its loyal constitutents in secular and religious matters. Subsequent to 1865 when the district superintendents reports are first included, they become commentaries on spiritual, economic, political, and cultural matters.

The two histories of the Erie Annual Conference by Gregg and Fradenburgh are of the utmost assistance. Both writers were ministers connected with the conference and were able to observe at first hand many of the things of which they wrote. Samuel Gregg was a charter member of the Erie conference and an active early itinerant. His paternal grandmother had been converted in Ireland by John Wesley. His mother at an early age united with the church in the wilderness. Often, she told him of the scenes she witnessed, and described the ministers

she had heard and the revivals she had known.[2] Gregg's two volumes record the history of Methodism within the bounds of the Erie Conference from the time of its inception to the year 1852.

The two volume work of J. N. Fradenburgh, who transferred to the Erie conference in 1871, records the history of Erie Conference Methodism from its earliest beginnings to the year 1905. His writings are notable for their extent and thoroughness. This writer examined all possible sources to some degree as well as closely examining all the existing copies of the "Pittsburg Christian Advocate" and the "New York Christian Advocate," all available volumes of the "Methodist Magazine" and the "Methodist Quarterly Review (bi-monthly)," the lives and miscellaneous writings of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the lives and reminisences of the early itinerants of the area, the county histories of all the counties of Pennsylvania, and the general histories of American Methodism.[3] The biographies of Bishop Roberts and of James Quinn and the autobiographies of James B. Finley and Alfred Branson, who were all early itinerants in this area, have been utilized in the preparation of this work.

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[2] Gregg, HM, I, 4.
[3] Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 5-10.

The History of Northwestern Pennsylvania, covering the period from 1780 to 1850, is the compilation of W. J. McKnight whose ancestors were among the earliest pioneers. Published in 1905, it qualifies as a primary source.

Two unpublished manuscripts are in the hands of the writer. They are both informative and interesting. A. C. Locke's "Interesting Itinerants of Earlier Days" is the writing of a contemporary Methodist minister whose family connection with Methodism in the territory reaches back to 1825. His father was a class leader for over fifty years and the latter's home was always a retreat for Methodist itinerants. His father delighted in relating the folklore stories of church and community for his children.[4] The other manuscript, "A Century of the Erie Conference in Education," is likewise the writing of a contemporary. I. R. Beiler is a member of the Erie Conference and professor of English Bible at Allegheny college.

It may be well to mention here that the writer is the son of a member of the Erie conference and himself is a probationary member of the aforementioned body and has spent the past fifteen years of his life in northwestern Pennsylvania.

The secondary works consulted consist of the general histories of Methodism by Daniels, Hyde, Stevens, and Sweet.

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[4] Locke, IED, 1.

The unpublished thesis of Arthur W. Blemaster entitled "The Community of Meadville On the Underground Railroad," presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Allegheny College in 1926, has been of help.

F. Procedure.

The substance of the thesis will be presented in seven chapters. The first is an introductory chapter designed to acquaint the reader with the peculiarities of the task and the limitations and mechanics of the inquiry. The next will show the condition of the territory of northwestern Pennsylvania prior to the introduction of Methodism. The introduction of Methodism and its progress to the time of the formation of the Erie Annual conference will be treated by the third chapter. The next will concern itself with the activities of the church from the formation of the Erie Annual Conference to the close of the Civil War. The following division related the movement of Methodism from the close of the war to the turn of the century. The succeeding chapter has to do with the affairs of the church from the beginning of the century to the present time. The last chapter will partake of the nature of a summary and in addition will serve to present the conclusions as well as suggestions for further inquiry which have been uncovered and suggested by the current study.

Definite factors have given rise to the foregoing arrange-

ment of chapters. The introductory chapter serves to reveal the nature and limitations of the current undertaking, to define the terms used, to present the reason for the study, to acquaint the reader with the sources, to outline the procedure used and to indicate the manner in which the findings will be treated. As the title of the following chapter indicates, it is designed to acquaint the reader with the condition of the land upon which the seeds of Methodism were to be sown. The next chapter seeks to deal with the beginnings of the movement in the territory and watch its early growth to the time when its activities were sufficiently advanced to warrant the formation of a conference to serve this and adjoining sections of Ohio and New York. The fourth chapter watches the progress of the movement when it was strained by abolition agitation and contention over slavery. It continues to the close of the Civil War when the slavery question was settled for the nation as a whole. The succeeding division watches the affairs of Methodism until the time when it had completed the first century of life in the territory. The subsequent chapter seeks to view the activities of the church from that time to the present day. The final section is devoted to that summary and those conclusions occasioned by the study and provides an opportunity for the presentation of those revelent matters demanding additional and separate consideration.

In Chapters IV, V, and VI the attitude of the conference relative to various considerations is regarded as reflecting the position of Methodism in northwestern Pennsylvania. While this practice seems at first sight to be unwarranted, it is to be remembered that this section constitutes what may be termed the "center of influence" of the conference.[5] Furthermore the conference has adopted most positions by a unanimous vote. Where disagreement has appeared the issue has been settled in a majority of cases by adoption or rejection of the proposition by an overwhelming majority.

Five maps are included. These are designed to show the geographic coverage of Methodism at the beginning of each period and at the present time.

While this inquiry in no way proports to be a statistical

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[5] Between 1836 and 1865 14 of the 30 sessions of the annual conference were held in Pennsylvania. The remaining sessions were held in either New York or Ohio. In 1836 22 of the 31 appointments (excluding special agents, presiding elders, professors) were in Pennsylvania. The rest were in Ohio and New York. Between 1866 and 1899, 23 of the 34 sessions of the annual conference were held in the Pennsylvania sector of the conference while the remaining sessions were conducted either in Ohio or New York. In 1865 85 of the 171 appointments were in Pennsylvania and 13,800 of the 27,800 church members were affiliated with churches in this area. Between 1900 and 1938 all but four of the annual conference sessions were held in Pennsylvania. The remainder were in New York state. At the beginning of the century 139 of 194 conference appointments were in Pennsylvania while 37,100 of the 46,500 members of churches were residents of Pennsylvania. Last year, 1938, 130 of the 192 of the appointments were in Pennsylvania while 62,700 of the 72,300 church members were Pennsylvanians.

analysis, graphs will be included to illustrate certain trends. Certain figures of minor importance will be gathered into a single table placed at the end of the last period. Figures for the earliest years are unavailable, hence tables and graphs cover the period since 1855. The figures presented are taken from the statistical tables included in the Minutes of the Erie Annual Conference. These figures represent totals and the result of adding the sums given in the tables for the individual charges in Pennsylvania. All statistics are compiled to the nearest

G. Treatment of the Findings.

The summary and conclusions are so classified as to duly consider the spiritual and material progress of the church and so as to also regard the existing relationship between the growth and expansion of Methodism and the development of the territory and the improvement of the social order.

Having completed the essential preliminary requirements the subject at hand may now be considered without further delay.

CHAPTER II

THE TERRITORY OF NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM

Essential to a critical evaluation and comprehensive understanding of the task at hand is a knowledge of the geography, history, inhabitants, and society of the territory of northwestern Pennsylvania prior to the appearance of the Methodists. The present chapter has as its function the presentation of such material. To this end consideration will be given to the geography of the area and its earliest inhabitants. The events relative to the first native penetration of the territory will be reviewed and mention made of the first missions to the Indians. Finally, the activities concurrent with the settlement of the territory are reviewed together with a survey of the resultant pioneer living conditions.

A. The Geography of the Area and Its Early Condition.

That portion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania involved in the study is, with the exception of a gradually rising plane which extends southward for approximately five miles from the shore of Lake Erie, a rough and mountainous region. The land is well drained and watered by the Allegheny, Clarion

and Mahoning rivers and their tributaries. In the early days the country was a wild and unbroken wilderness.[1] The land was covered with a heavy growth of timber which was predominately hemlock and pine.[2] Below the surface, yet to be discovered, were great deposits of coal, oil, natural gas and some iron ore. Land, air and water were well populated with many varieties of game. The woods were abundant with beaver, bison, elk, wolf, bear, deer, fox, wild cat, skunk, rabbit, squirrel, opposum and other animals.[3] In the streams were pike, bass, catfish, suckers, sunfish, hornchubs, mountain trout and eel which the early settlers took by hook, seine, gun or gig.[4] Such birds as wild turkey, eagles, wild geese, hawks, pheasant, grouse abounded with other more common fowl.[5]

Rattlesnakes were exceedingly numerous. Dens of vicious rattlers existed in every locality.[6] The dens of these reptiles had to be visited by bold, hardy men annually every spring to kill and destroy these reptiles as they emerged into the sun.[7] Sometimes actual battles occurred between pioneer and rattlesnakes. One recorded instance relates how over two hundred yellow rattlesnakes were killed after they had sur-

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1 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 24.
2 McKnight, HNP, 233.
3 Ibid, 107 ff.
4 Ibid, 227.
5 Ibid, 137 ff.
6 Ibid, 234.
7 Ibid, 234.

rounded the wife of an early pioneer.[8]

B. The Early Occupants of the Land.

This territory was occupied by the Seneca nation of the Iroquois Confederacy previous to the appearance of the white man.[9] This tribe was the most numerous, powerful and warlike of the Iroquois[10] and produced its greatest orators: Cornplanter, Red Jacket and Farmer's brother.[11] Indian trails extending like a cobweb over the territory were appropriated by the trader and today are followed by some of the established paths of travel.[12] The white man, when fully understood, could transact the most important business among them with as much safety as he could today in any center of commerce.[13]

The earliest whites to occupy this territory were the French.

> As early as the year 1750 the French had taken possession of this territory as a part of the great valley of the "Mississippi," which they claimed in connection with the "colonies in Canida," and had erected three fortresses, and garrisoned them with soldiers for its protection. One of these forts was called "Presque Isel," after an island of that

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8 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 30, quoted from the History of Mercer County, Brown, Funk, and Co., 1888, p. 336.
9 McKnight, HNP, 37.
10 Ibid, 37.
11 Ibid, 27.
12 Ibid, 38.
13 Ibid, 37.

name near the south shore of Lake Erie, forming the beautiful bay at Erie, Pa. The fort stood on the bank of the lake, about one mile below the city of Erie. Another of these forts stood near the village of Waterford, Erie County, Pa., about twelve miles south of Erie, and was called "Fort La Boeuf," perhaps after some French officer of that name. The third fort stood near the mouth of French Creek, just below the village of Franklin, Pa., and was called "Fort Venango," The soldiers garrisoned in these forts were the first white men in this part of the country.[14]

The first English came soon after the fall of Canada into the hands of Great Britain when a detachment of a regiment recruited in New Hampshire moved west under Major Robert Rodgers to take control of Detroit.[15] This section of the country came into the possession of England by the Treaty of Paris in 1736 and twenty years later by a treaty of the same name was ceded to the United States.[16]

C. Native Penetration of the Territory and Early Missionaries to the Indians.

The first real penetration of the territory by a native colonist was made by George Washington. He was sent, in 1754, by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to induce the commander of the French at Fort Le Boeuf to peaceably depart from the territories claimed by Virginia.[17]

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[14] Gregg, HM, I, 15.
[15] Ibid, I, 16.
[16] Ibid, I, 17.
[17] Ibid, I, 15.

Before 1770 a number of Moravian missionaries had travelled through the section. As early as 1758, Christian Fredric Post, a Moravian, was in the territory. His mission was as much motivated by the desire of the government of Pennsylvania to break the existing alliance between the French and Indians as for religious reasons.[18]

"In 1762, the great Moravian missionary, the Reverend John Heckewelder, may have, and probably did, spend a day or two in Punxsutawney."[19]

Another heroic Moravian, The Reverend David Zeisburger, visited the Muncy Indians who in 1767 were living on the banks of the Allegheny River in what is now Forest county.[20] While the Indians did listen to his sermons, Zeisburger left after seven days due to the fear of murder.[21] However, at Goshgohunk, a town of the Delawares, consisting of three villages at the confluence of the Tionesta Creek and Allegheny river, a mission was established after some difficulty by Zeisburger.[22] When the mission was later threatened by opposition, it was moved up the Allegheny to Lawanakanuck which is near the present site of West Hickory.[23] Indian wars

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18 McKnight, HNP, 256.
19 Ibid, 46.
20 Ibid, 46.
21 Ibid, 46.
22 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 26.
23 Ibid, 27.

forced another migration in 1770 and at the invitation of a friendly chief the settlement moved to Beaver county where Friedenstadt or the "City of Peace" was established.[24]

D. The Settlement of the Territory.

The revolutionary war was a contributing factor in the settlement of this section of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Early in 1780 the General Assembly promised to Pennsylvanians serving with the revolutionary army certain donations and quantities of land.[25] These donation lands, as they were known, comprised parts of the present counties of Lawrence, Butler, Armstrong, Venango, Forest, Warren and Erie, and all the counties of Mercer and Crawford.[26] Another act of the assembly exempted from taxation the land which fell to the lot of each soldier during his life time providing the land was not transferred or assigned to another.[27] However, at the close of the revolution, the Indians still claimed this territory.[28] Commissioners were appointed and in 1784 and 1785 meetings were held with the Indians who relinquished their claim to the present-day counties of Tioga, Potter, McKean, Warren, Crawford, Venango, Forest, Clarion, Elk,

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24 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 27.
25 Ibid, I, 24.
26 Ibid, I, 24.
27 Ibid, I, 24.
28 McKnight, HNP, 55.

Jefferson, Cameron, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer and parts of the counties of Bradford, Clinton, Clearfield, Indiana, Armstrong, Beaver and Erie.[29] These lands were immediately opened to the settler. However, it was not until the price of unappropriated land was reduced to $13.33 per hundred acres in 1792 that any appreciable sale of land was effected.[30] During 1792-93-94 the unappropriated lands were disposed of at a rapid rate.[31] Settlement was greatly stimulated by an act of the legislature in 1795 which granted four hundred acres of land to any person who would make actual settlement for five years, clear and fit for cultivation twenty-five acres, build a small house, and at a specified time pay twenty dollars to the state for each one hundred acres.[32] In this same year an act of the legislature established the towns of Erie, Franklin, Waterford and Warren.[33]

Another factor of importance to the settlement of the area was the defeat of the Indians by General Anthony Wayne. The resulting treaty removed the threat of Indian attack in this section.[34]

Also of importance to the settlement of this territory

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29 McKnight, HNP, 61.
30 Ibid, 65.
31 Ibid, 65.
32 Gregg, HM, I, 18.
33 McKnight, HNP, 74.
34 Ibid, I, 19.

were the previously mentioned French forts which now became trading posts.

> The French forts referred to were now converted into trading posts, and became radiating points from which the white settlements were gradually extended in all directions into the surrounding country, the traders rendering valuable assistance by furnishing the inhabitants with provisions and implements of husbandry in exchange for furs, skins, and wild meat.[35]

By 1797 a continuous line of settlements were to be found between the Allegheny River and Lake Erie[36] and by 1798 the settlements in the section were evidencing a degree of healthful improvement.[37]

E. Pioneer Living Conditions.

The first settlers came to an inhospitable land and were forced to undergo increditable hardships. Before they could become independent they had to clear the land and establish homes.

> The men were engaged in the herculean labor, day after day, of enlarging the little patch of sunshine about their homes, cutting away the forest, burning off the brush and caring for the few animals which they brought with them or soon procured, and in hunting. While they were engaged in the heavy labor of the field and forest, or following the deer, or seeking other game, their helpmeets were busied with the household duties, providing for the day and for the winter coming

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35 Gregg, HM, I, 19.
36 Ibid, 24.
37 Ibid, 27.

on, cooking, making clothes, spinning, and weaving. They were fitted by nature and experience to be the consorts of the brave men who first came into the western wilderness. They were heroic in their endurance of hardship and privation and loneliness.[38]

The Pioneer's home was the log cabin and he, possessing but the bare necessities of existance, led a simple life.

The home of the pioneer was a log cabin, one story high, chinked and daubed, having a fireplace in one end, with a chimney built of sticks and mud. . . . These cabins were usually small, but some were perhaps twenty by thirty feet, with a hole cut in two logs for a single window,--oiled paper being used for glass. . . .Wooden benches and stools were a luxury upon which to rest or sit while feasting on mush and milk, buckwheat cakes, hog and hominy.[39]

The steady influx of settlers resulted in the establishment of communities and the heighborly cooperation of the pioneers occasioned the beginnings of social life. The men collected for log rollings, harvestings and husking bees while quilting parties and apple-butter-makings afforded opportunity for gatherings of women folk.[40] The men found recreation in rifle shooting, foot racing, wrestling and jumping matches.[41] The social life of the younger generation consisted of various kinds of frolics while weddings were times of hilarious celebration for all the members of the community.[42]

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38 McKnight, HNP, 228.
39 Ibid, 223.
40 Ibid, 230.
41 Ibid, 230.
42 Ibid, 230.

> In those days friends and neighbors could meet together and enjoy themselves, and enter into the spirit of social amusement with a hearty good-will, a geniality of manners, a corresponding depth of soul, both among the old and young, to which modern society is unaccustomed. Our ancestors did not make a special invitation the only pass to their dwellings, and they entertained those who visited them with a hospitality that is not generally practised at the present time. Guests did not assemble then to criticise the decorations, furniture, dress, manners, and surroundings of those by whom they were invited. They were sensible people, with clear heads and warm hearts, they visited each other to promote mutual enjoyment, and believed in genuine earnestness in all things.[43]

In these early days organized religious life was not highly developed. Preaching was but an occasional event in most of the settlements.[44] Nevertheless, the Christianity of the period seems to have had much to commend it.

> The type of Christianity of that period will not suffer by comparison with that of the present day. If the people of olden times had less for costly apparel and ostentatious display, they had also more for offices of charity and benevolence; if they did not have the splendor and luxuries of wealth, they at least had no infirmaries or paupers, very few lawyers, and but little use for jails. The vain and thoughtless may jeer at their unpretending manners and customs, but in all the elements of true manhood and true womanhood it may be safely averred that they were more than the peers of the generation that now occupy their places.[45]

The Presbyterian was the pioneer church in this wilderness.[46] At the appearance of the "Methodists" the Presbyter-

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43 McKnight, HNP, 20.
44 Ibid, 281.
45 Ibid, 20-21.
46 Ibid, 276.

ians were already in the possession of the land.[47] The Presbyterian synod of Pennsylvania had sent out ministers who had laid out all or most of all the settlements into congregational districts; and wherever they could gather a sufficient number of members, organized churches, and ordained elders, so that they seemed to have taken possession of the entire country.[48] The Presbytery of Erie was erected by the Synod of Virginia in 1801.[49] Between 1802 and 1803 numerous settlements appealed to the Synod for preachers.[50] Most important of these settlements were Slippery Rock, Franklin, Oil Creek, Gravel Run, Presque Isle, Cussawago, Pyamuting, Conneautee, Outlet of Conneaut, Hugh McGirl's on Pithole Creek, Andrew's on Brokenstraw Creek, Jackson's on the Conewango, and Major Gray's on French Creek.[51]

Having thus acquainted ourselves with the early history of the area and formed some conception of the economic, social and religious conditions which existed there at the close of the eighteenth century, it is now possible to witness the events which cluster about the introduction of Methodism.

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47 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 27.
48 LJQ, 58-9.
49 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 27.
50 Ibid, 27.
51 Ibid, 27-28.

CHAPTER III

1796--1836 THE PERIOD FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM TO THE FORMATION OF THE ERIE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The current chapter seeks to provide the reader with an account of the earliest Methodist activity in the territory of Northwestern Pennsylvania. It strives to present a picture of the founding of Methodism here and furnish an account of the earliest spread and increase of the new movement. To this end, the chapter has been divided into five sections which are devoted to the events concurrent with the establishment of the first Methodist class and an observation of the events connected with the jurisdiction of the various conferences is under consideration.

A. The Introduction of Methodism.

The earliest Methodists of which we have record entered northwestern Pennsylvania in the year 1796.[1] In the spring of this year Robert R. Roberts, a young man of eighteen, travelling on foot and leading three other youths, penetrated this territory and decided to commence a settlement on the Shenago

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1 Gregg, HM, I, 22.

river in Mercer County.[2] Already a Methodist, Roberts had experienced religion at the age of ten and united with a Methodist society near his home in Ligonier, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.[3] So great was the interest of the Roberts family in Methodism that society and preachers were removed to their home.[4] Young Roberts manifested a deep interest in religion and profited much from the instruction of the preachers and from such reading as he was able to do when not working on his father's farm.[5]

Early in the spring of 1797, Messers Thomas and Lewis Roberts together with Jacob Gurwell, a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and several other persons arrived in the little settlement commenced in the previous year by R. R. Roberts.[6] The hardships of this first year were unduely severe due to a combination of unfavorable circumstances which affected the entire area and the settlement was almost abandoned.[7]

In the early spring of 1798 the parents of Roberts arrived at the new settlement and were soon joined by several of their former neighbors of whom the Stevensons, Walkers, M'Lanes, and

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2 Gregg, HM, I, 21-23.
3 Ibid, 20.
4 Ibid, 20.
5 Ibid, 20.
6 Ibid, 25.
7 Ibid, 26.

Dumars were regular members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[8] About the same time Thomas M'Clelland, who like Gurwell was an Irishman and a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, settled in the vicinity.[9] He had preached four years, two of which had been in his native land under the direction of John Wesley.[10] M'Clelland was an excellent preacher and a man of great zeal and unblemished Christian character.[11]

These two local preachers, Gurwell and M'Clelland, commenced preaching the gospel in rude log cabins, in groves, or wherever a little group could be convened and some time in the summer of 1798 formed a Methodist class which was made up of such persons as had brought their letters with them.[12]

> These two local preachers commenced preaching the Gospel in rude log-cabins and in groves, and wherever a little group could be convened, and some time in the summer of 1798 they formed a class consisting of such persons as had brought letters of membership with them, appointing Robert R. Roberts leader; this being the first class, and he the first leader, within the present bounds of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[13]

mThis nucleus of Methodism in northwestern Pennsylvania was made up of the following individuals.

> Robert R. Roberts, leader, Reverend Thomas M'Clelland and wife, James Stevenson and wife, Wim Sindsig and wife, Lewis Roberts and wife, John Honnel and wife,

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8 Gregg, HM, I, 28.
9 Ibid, 28.
10 Elliott, LBR, 66.
11 Ibid, 67.
12 Gregg, HM, I, 29.
13 Ibid, 29.

John M'Granehan and wife, Wm. M'Granehan and wife, John Caughey and wife, John Rodgers and wife, William M'Lean and wife, Wm. Steward and Nancy Wilson.[14]

From this humble beginning Methodism soon spread out to other settlements. "Emmigration poured into the country bringing many Methodist families from the East."[15] With this influx of new settlers and especially of members of the Methodist Episcopal Church the Shenago settlement was extended Southward and in 1802[16] another class, know as the "south class" was formed.[17] Its membership included:

George M'Fertidge and wife, Thomas Dumars and wife, James Dumars and wife, John Walters and wife, Reverend Jacob Gorwell and wife, James Walker and wife, Morris Dunlavy and wife, William Gurwell and wife.[18]

The Reverend Thomas M'Clelland and the Reverend Jacob Gurwell provided the spiritual guidance and inspiration for these early Methodists for a number of years prior to the appearance of the regular itineracy.[19] Not only did they provide regular preaching for the established classes but from time to time found their way into new settlements where they often preached the gospel.[20] In 1800 they established an appointment and formed a class on French Creek, a few miles below Meadville,

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14 Gregg, HM, I, 30.
15 Stevens, IV, 91.
16 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 82.
17 Gregg, HM, I, 30.
18 Ibid, 30.
19 Ibid, 30.
20 Ibid, 30.

at a place known as Mumford's settlement,[21] which eventually died out.[22]

The Shenago class made a significant contribution to American Methodism. Its first class leader, Robert R. Roberts, "was destined to become one of the most effective evangelists and bishops of the church which had found him in these remote woods."[23] As early as 1800 he had obtained a license to preach.[24] He was received on trial in the Baltimore conference in 1802 and two years later was ordained by Bishop Asbury.[25] Following the death of Bishop Asbury in 1816 Robert R. Roberts who had brilliantly served the cause of Methodism was elected bishop[26] and on May 17, 1816, was consecrated to that office.[27] It is said that "Robert R. Roberts, the sixth bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was one of the most perfect specimens of frontier minister ever produced in America."[28] "His love for frontier life fitted him to serve as bishop, to use the papal phrase, <u>in partibus infidalium</u>, among the frontiersmen."[29] Of his rise Gregg says,

> I will say without fear of contradiction form any source, or of giving offense to any one, that in

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21 Gregg, HM, 36.
22 Ibid, 36.
23 Stevens, IV, 84.
24 Elliott, LBR, 90.
25 Ibid, 128.
26 Sweet, MAH, 174.
27 Gregg, HM, I, 75.
28 Daniels, IHM, 599.
29 Hyde, SM, 466.

the whole eventful history of Methodism in Europe and America, where so many brilliant Gospel luminaries have been raised up, that no man ever rose from such obscurity, amid so many embarrassing circumstances, in so short a time, to such an eminent position, and maintained it to the end of life with so much credit to himself and usefulness to the Church.[30]

B. The Period of the Baltimore Conference 1800--1812.

The Baltimore conference was the first to occupy this territory since the Methodists who settled her had come from that part of Pennsylvania which received its ministers from Baltimore.[31] The earliest itinerant, P. B. Davis, came to the area in 1800.[32] A few societies were organized and a circuit, called the Erie, was formed which reported 37 members to the conference of 1801.[33] For some unknown reason Davis did not reach the classes heretofore mentioned.[34]

In 1801 Joseph Shane was assigned to the Shenago circuit and James Quinn to the Erie.[35] These two circuits were a part of the Pittsburg District of the Baltimore conference and embraced all the country west of the Allegheny River from the Ohio to Lake Erie.[36] The status of the Erie circuit can be

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30 Gregg, HM, I, 75.
31 Ibid, 37.
32 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 159.
33 Ibid, 159.
34 Gregg, HM, I, 35.
35 MAC, I, 99.
36 Gregg, HM, I, 37.

gathered from the following.

> Quinn's whole field had not a single society or class. He went forth to organize it. . . .His circuit when formed contained twenty appointments, requiring him to travel four hundred miles every four weeks.[37]

The first class formed in this section was near Lexington in Springfield township, Erie County, at the house of John Mershon.[38] Before the close of the church year some half dozen other classes had been formed on this circuit.[39] At the conference of 1802 the Shenago circuit reported 119 members and the Erie 65.[40]

Time and space do not permit the inclusion of the year by year reports of membership or the annual records of appointments. It is sufficient to say that all these early itinerants were men of great faith, indefatigable endurance, and zealous enthusiasm. These men could excell the old trapper in shooting at a mark, and yet lead the rude hunter to the feet of Jesus. They were men well calculated to lead the host of young men cast out into this wilderness to cultivate it for God.[41] While their preaching talents varied, their formal education and their theological views were negligible. They presented forceful clear-cut sermons, well suited to call the wandering and forgotten to repentence. Even in these days a few found

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37 Stevens, HMA, 92.
38 Wright, LJQ, 58.
39 Stevens, HMA, IV, 92.
40 MAC, I, 103.
41 Gregg, HM, I, 47.

time to write and publish books.[42]

Some concept of the working conditions of the itineracy in this area at the beginning of the nineteenth century can be gathered from the following description of the Erie circuit of that day.

> The Erie and Deerfield Circuit of this time was more than four hundred miles in circumference. And this journey, to be accomplished every four weeks, was along blind paths found by marked trees, across swollen unbridged streams, over rugged precipices and high hills, now winding around steep, rocky mountain sides, and then plunging through deep miry morasses, sometimes camping in the woods all night, wearied and hungry, resting upon the root of some forest tree, while the faithful horse stood tied up without a mouthful to eat, and not unfrequently encountering wild beasts, rude savage men, and venomous serpents.[43]

For such work the intinerant received by a meager salary. Between 1800 and 1816 their support from the church was as follows.

1. The annual salary of the traveling preacher shall be eighty dollars and their traveling expenses.
2. The annual allowance of the wives of the travelling preachers shall be eighty dollars.
3. Each child of a travelling preacher shall be allowed sixteen dollars annually to the age of seven years, and twenty-four dollars annually from the age of seven to fourteen years; <u>nevertheless</u>, this rule shall not apply to the children of preachers whose family are provided for by other means in their circuits respectively.[44]

However, it must be rembered that few of these early itinerants

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42 Gregg, HM, I, 49.
43 Ibid, 63-64.
44 Ibid, 45.

were married.[45]

Despite such conditions of labor and the often inadequate remuneration the itinerants travelled throughout the territory organizing new classes and caring for them. By the year 1806 they had traveled eastward into what is now Warren county.[46] While the Shenago and Erie circuits continued to be the only circuits in this area they spread Methodism throughout the rural areas and established it in some settlements. By 1803 classes had been formed on Sugar Creek near Titusville and at the Daniel's homestead twelve miles northeast of Meadville.[47] In 1805 other class were to be found on Pithole Creek and near the present site of New Castle.[48] At the end of the era of the Baltimore Conference classes had been established at Conneaut, Erie County,[49] Rockville, Crawford County,[50] (then called Gravel Run), Franklin,[51] Sharon,[52] Milli Village, Crawford County[53] and North East.[54] The itinerants of the "Shetockway" (Chautauqua)[55] circuit of the Genesee Conference touched Warren County in the year 1811 and preached at settle-

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45 Elliott, LBR, 88.
46 Gregg, HM, I, 68.
47 Ibid, 52.
48 Ibid, 68.
49 Ibid, 68.
50 Ibid, 93.
51 Ibid, 93.
52 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 222.
53 Ibid, 225.
54 Ibid, 289.
55 Writer's parenthesis.

ments on the Allegheny river and its tributaries, the Conewango and the Brokenstraw.[56] In 1812 the Erie circuit reported 536 members and the Shenago 585.[57] So effective was the work of these early ministers that "by the year 1812, Methodism had achieved a firm and dominant grip upon all the settled area west of mountains.[58]

In achieving such success Methodism met with bitter opposition from the Presbyterians who were already well organized in this territory.[59]

> The early settlers were puritanical in their descent, with strong predilections for the old and well-established system of partial salvation, the general features of which the old Puritan divines had dyed, as it were, into their very souls. Methodism was more elastic and latitudinarian in its nature and tendencies, and hence it was looked upon as an antagonistic agent bordering on heresy which ought to be sternly resisted. Acting in accordance with these views, the most violent attacks were made upon our doctrines and usages by the clergymen of the country, which rendered it necessary for our ministers in those days to study closely the writings of Mr. Fletcher, and discuss over again those very doctrines of his day, and faithfully the work accomplished.[60]

This difference in theology manifested itself in a keen religious rivalry[61] which often broke forth in heated public debate.[62] Unfortunate for both Methodist and Presbyterian

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56 Gregg, HM, I, 98.
57 MAC, I, 210.
58 Sweet, CDO, 27.
59 Gregg, HM, I, 39.
60 Ibid, 66.
61 Ibid, 39.
62 Elliott, LBR, 139-40.

was the fact that each entered upon his work too much in the spirit of religious rivalry rather than looking upon and treating each other as fellow-laborers.[63] Such conditions led to a great degree of intolerance which came to a climax in the death of Thomas Branch who was doubtlessly the first Methodist preacher within the bounds of the present charge of North East.[64]

Branch, a native of Connecticut, commenced preaching in 1800.[65] He was admitted on trial in the New York conference in 1801 in the company with Martin Ruter and Elijah Hedding.[66] By 1806 he had so outstripped his illustrious compeers that he was appointed presiding elder of the New London District.[67] In 1807 he was transferred to the Vermont District where he labored for four years with a zeal too great for his strength.[68] Pulmonary consumption resulted and in hope of bettering his health he transferred to the Western Conference in 1811.[69] In the spring of 1812 he commenced his journey to his new station, Marietta, Ohio.[70]

> On arriving at North East, Erie County, Pennsylvania, he found himself so far reduced in strength that he

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63 Gregg, HM, I, 39.
64 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 267.
65 Gregg, HM, I, 108.
66 Ibid, 108.
67 Ibid, 108.
68 Ibid, 108.
69 Ibid, 108.
70 Ibid, 108.

could proceed no further. There were no Methodists in this town at this time, or within twenty miles of it, with whom he could stop, or of whom receive kind attention.[71]

He preached on a Sabbath, and at the close of the service stated to the strangers that he was on a journey, that he was ill, and unable to proceed, and desired that some one would entertain him till he should recover his strength sufficiently to pursue his journey. There was a long time of silence in the congregation. At last one man came forward and invited him home. . . .At that house he lingered many weeks, and finally expired. . . .He frequently preached, prayed, and exhorted, sitting on his bed, when he was unable to go out, or even to stand. And so he continued laboring for the salvation of men while his strength would permit.[72]

In this way an extensive religious awakening was produced in the settlement, which called forth the most determined opposition of the Presbyterians who had organized and built a church here.[73] So bitter became this opposition that when a number of his friends desired to give him a respectable funeral and burial the Presbyterians refused the use of their log church, denied interment in the burying ground, and prevented anyone from offering a respectable team or carriage for the purpose of carrying his remains to wood lot outside of the town for burial.[74]

Such religious animosity was not peculiar to the period of the Baltimore conference for it lingered on for many years and in some localities there is a noticeable degree of diffidence

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71 Gregg, HM, I, 108.
72 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 268-269.
73 Gregg, HM, I, 108-109.
74 Ibid, 109.

yet discernable.

This earliest period of the itineracy is also notable in that it marks the introduction of the camp meeting. The first recorded camp meetings in this area occurred in the year 1811.[75] At one of the meetings of this year held near Franklin a young man named Henry B. Branscom was converted, who later became a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church.[76]

C. The Period of the Ohio Conference 1812--1820.

In 1812 the Shenago and Erie circuits became a part of the Ohio District of the newly formed Ohio Conference.[77] These remained the only circuits of this conference in this area until 1815 when the "Chatauque" (Chautauqua)[78] circuit appears.[79] This circuit lay mostly in New York state but probably served the settlements in Warren County.[80] The Philadelphia conference touched the eastern edge of the territory of northwestern Pennsylvania and for some time Franklin was served by its itinerants.[81] In 1812 the Mahoning Circuit of the Baltimore Conference was formed and until 1825 served the territory along the Mahoning River which is now the southernmost fringe

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75 Gregg, HM, I, 98.
76 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 272-275.
77 MAC, I, 214.
78 Writer's parenthesis.
79 MAC, I, 260.
80 Gregg, HM, I, 121.
81 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 262.

of the area under consideration.[82] The Shenango circuit disappeared in 1817 when it was divided between the Erie and Beaver Circuits.[83]

Secular conditions had a marked effect upon the progress of the work during the early years of this period. Sickness, hard times, and war settled upon the area.[84] Jacob Young, presiding elder of the Ohio district speaks thus of the situation in 1812.

> As far as temporalities were concerned, we began to feel the effects of hard times. War between the United States and Great Britain was progressing. Provisions of all kinds were very high. At times we felt discouraged, and some thought of retiring from the work; but their courage revived, their wives were zealous for the cause, and exhorted their husbands to weather the storm.[85]

Conditions grew worse and in 1813 Young related the following:

> The war was still going on between England and the United States. The people were yet very uneasy along the Lake shore, more than half down to Pittsburgh. They had not recovered from the panic of last year, occasioned by Hull's surrender of Detroit. And to heighten our trouble through the country, the fever had broken out in the camp at Black Rock, run up the lake, and spread out through the country. They called it the cold plague. It was far worse than either the British or the Indians. There was no guarding against it. It was almost as bad as cholera in later days. . . .I suffered much more with cold this

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82 Gregg, HM, I, 225.
83 Ibid, 155.
84 Ibid, 112-117.
85 Ibid, 112.

winter than ever before. Sometimes I would have to give fifty cents for a peck of oats for my weary horse, and I have paid as high as four dollars for shoeing my horse. I was often entirely out of money, but some one always took compassion on me and supplied my wants. I commenced my third round under more favorable circumstances, but we had but little revival the whole year.[86]

Despite such conditions the Methodist itinerants were often welcomed by many. In 1813 a federal judge in Erie, upon learning that a Methodist missionary was in the town and willing to preach, adjourned court that the court house might be used for the service.[87] Upon this particular occasion Commodore Perry, together with many of his officers and men, attended the service and upon the following day the Commodore personally escorted the itinerant to the navy yard where he showed him the preparations which were being made for the forthcoming battle of Lake Erie.[88]

Only two classes are recorded as having been formed between 1812 and 1816. One of these was seven miles north of Meadville and was formed in 1812;[89] the other at Springfield Corners in Erie county in 1814.[90] In the next four years, however, numerous classes were formed.[91]

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86 Gregg, HM, I, 117-118.
87 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 260.
88 Ibid, 261.
89 Gregg, HM, I, 116.
90 Ibid, 124.
91 Near Warren (Gregg, HM, I, 150), Clarion (Ibid, 153), Albion (Ibid, 153), 1816. 1817, Girard (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 339), Springfield (Ibid, 341), Rimersburg (Ibid, 342). 1818, Espyville (Ibid, 361). 1819, McKean, (Ibid, 173), Clarksville (Ibid, 365).

The formation of the class near what is now Clarion shortly after 1817[92] is notable in that it designates the earliest penetration of the territory east of the Allegheny and north of the Mahoning River by Methodists. This class became a part of the Mahoning Circuit of the Baltimore Conference.[93]

Many of the classes became strong enough to build meeting houses. The first of these was erected in the vicinity of New Castle in 1815.[94] In the following year one was erected at Millbrook, Mercer County,[95] while Youngsville[96] and Mercer[97] erected churches in 1817.

In these years the revival became prevalent and the camp meeting spread throughout the area. At least four large camp meetings were held in 1817. These occurred at Lexington and North East,[98] Erie county,[99] at Rockville, Crawford County,[100] and at Youngsville, Warren County.[101] An account of the Youngsville meeting furnishes the first record of temperance preaching. Here, "Mr. Finley dealt some severe

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92 Gregg, HM, I, 153.
93 Ibid, 153.
94 Ibid, 142.
95 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 332.
96 Ibid, 341.
97 Gregg, HM, I, 168.
98 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 301
99 Ibid, 319.
100 Gregg, HM, I, 165.
101 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 319.

blows in his sermon on whisky makers and venders, which gave great offense to some persons engaged in that business."[102] Some concept of the camp meeting proceedings can be gathered from the following description of the North East gathering:

> A camp meeting had never been held in these parts before and many were induced, out of mere curiosity, to attend the meeting. The meeting commenced under favorable auspices, and many were awakened and converted; Sabbath, however, was the great day of feast. When the preacher addressed the vast congregation, from Revelation XX:12--"For the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and another book, which is the book of life, and the dead shall be judged according to their works"--there was not one unattentive soul on the ground. The whole congregation was melted into tears, and deep groans, and cries for mercy were heard, bursting forth from hearts convinced of sin and judgment. Occasionally shouts of victory and triumph were heard from the pious, who waited the happy change. The evening was devoted to praying and laboring with mourners. After the ring was formed, and we commenced our address to the throne of grace, the Holy Spirit fell on us, and multitudes within and without the ring fell under the shocks of Divine Power. Many mariners from the port of Erie were there, and some of them became the subjects of awakening grace. I heard one say to the sheriff, "Mr. B. is down, crying for mercy." To this he replied, "If the Methodists can make him a better man, it is more than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can do, for he has been in hearly all the prisons of the state." This called my attention to Mr. B. whom I found in great distress, earnestly seeking the salvation of his soul. I gave him all the instruction I could, and soon the light of heaven broke on him, and the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in its beams. He was soundly converted and what fines and imprisonments could not accomplish, the grace of God secured. He lived and died a good man.[103]

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102 Gregg, HM, I, 164.
103 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 319-20 from Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 301-304.

During these years between 1812 and 1820 the circuit riders were called upon to endure no small amount of hardship, in the performance of their tasks. James B. Finley, Presiding Elder of the Ohio District in 1817 speaks of the appointments and the tasks before the itinerants as they went forth in the following way.

> In the true spirit of Gospel ministers the brethren went to their respective fields of labor. Great were the toils and hardships they were called to endure. The winter was extremely severe, the cold being almost beyond endurance; yet the Lord crowned the labor and sufferings of his ministers with success. The country was but sparsely settled, the rides were long and roads rough, the fare hard and provisions scarce; but in the midst of all the Lord was with them. To preach once every day and lead class, after having traveled from ten to twenty miles, and two or three times on the Sabbath, leading as many classes, with the privilege of being at home three days out of thirty, would now be regarded as severe work.[104]

With working conditions of this type prevalent, the action of the General Conference of 1816 which increased the allowances for preachers and their wives to one hundred dollars each, leaving the amount to their children as before, was undoubtedly welcomes by the early itinerants.[105]

In the last years of this period the missionary movement was inaugurated and from this time onward collections were taken on the different circuits in this territory.[106] No information is available which would indicate the amounts con-

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104 Gregg, HM, I, 155-156.
105 Ibid, 128. See also Emery, HD
106 Ibid, 190.

tributed.

D. The Years of the Ohio and the Genesee Conferences 1820--1825.

The year 1820 found two conferences serving the northwestern portion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Erie circuit was the only remaining circuit of the Ohio conference in the area in this year.[107] The Chautauqua circuit previously mentioned now became a part of the Genesee district of the conference of that name and a new circuit, known as the Lake, was formed which served Methodism along the shore of Lake Erie both in Pennsylvania and in New York.[108] The following year, 1821, the Erie District of the Genesee conference was formed and consisted of the Lake, the Chautauqua, and the newly formed French Creek circuits.[109] Another new circuit, called the New Castle was formed by the Ohio Conference in 1821 and was a part of the Ohio district.[110] In 1822 the western part of the Lake circuit became the North East[111] while the Erie was divided to form the Mercer.[112] These circuits served this area until the close of the period in 1825.

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107 Gregg, HM, I, 182.
108 Ibid, 182.
109 Ibid, 190.
110 Ibid, 191.
111 Ibid, 201.
112 Ibid, 201.

Only eleven classes are recorded as having been formed during the five year period between 1820 and 1825.[113] The class formed at Punxsutawney, Jefferson county, in 1821, was connected with the Mahoning circuit of the Baltimore conference[114] until 1825, when it became a part of the Pittsburg Conference.[115]

With but twenty Methodist classes recorded as having been formed in the twelve years between 1812 and 1824 there appears some justification for McKnight's statement that,

> The Methodists were slow in making an inroad in the northwest. The ground had been occupied by other denominations, and hostile and bitter prejudice existed against the new sect.[116]

Furthermore it must be realized that in the year 1820 no section of northwestern Pennsylvania averaged over eighteen inhabitants to the square mile and in the eastern portion of the area less than two people could be found to the square mile.[117]

However, the chief cause for the lag of Methodism arose

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113 1820: Mercer (Gregg, HM, I, 185), near Meadville (Ibid, 185), Girard Hollow (Ibid, 198). 1821: Pleasantville (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 463), Tidioute (Ibid, 464), Punxsutawney (Gregg, HM, I, 198). 1822: "State Road" near Meadville (Ibid, 209). 1823: Charlestown, Mercer County (Ibid, 214). 1824: Shippenville (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 289), Meadville (Gregg, HM, I, 222), South Shenango or North Bank (Ibid, 223).

114 Gregg, HM, I, 198.

115 Ibid, 225.

116 McKnight, HNP, 280.

117 Sweet, CDO, map following p. 26.

from the error of confining its efforts and activities to the rural areas and neglecting to secure its full share of influence in the growing villages which gave promise of becoming cities or centers of business for the surrounding country.[118] Prior to 1822 neither Erie nor Meadville had any Methodist organization.[119] Two factors contributed to the introduction of Methodism in the promising settlements. The first was the lack of popular preachers in other denominations; the second was the desire of politicians who were the controlling voice in the settlement to curry Methodist favor and secure their votes.[120]

The progress of Methodism in this area was accelerated by the removal of the restriction upon the marriage of the circuit riders. A definite improvement in the spirit of the men and the progress of the work is noted after 1817 when the itinerants married and made their homes in this area.[121]

Calvinistic opposition appeared in 1820 at Mercer where persecution ran high and schools, churches, and court houses were refused to the Methodists for their meetings.[122] Nevertheless by 1822 the society here had grown rapidly despite the most violent Calvinistic prejudices.[123]

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118 Gregg, HM, I, 199.
119 Ibid, 200.
120 Brunson, LAB, 218.
121 Ibid, 174.
122 Gregg, HM, I, 185.
123 Ibid, 201.

While circumstances thus seemingly conspired to seriously hamper the spread of Methodism camp meetings and revivals were conducted, a few churches erected, and the Sunday School movement inaugurated. Of this latter activity Gregg writes:

> As early as 1820 Sunday-schools began to be organized in different parts of our work, not however by spontaneous growth, without effort on the part of friends, nor without stern and determined opposition from sources that should have been friendly. Some supposed that they were violating the sanctity of the Sabbath by collecting such groups of noisy children on that day; while others thought it well that the children of the poor should be collected together on the Sabbath and taught, but that persons able to pay for the instruction of their children should have it done on some other day. . . .They constantly increased from year to year as their usefulness became more apparent to our people. Some of our ministers were active in getting them organized, while many of them treated the institution with cold indifference.[124]

E. The Pittsburg Conference 1825--1835.

In 1825 the Methodist circuits in this area were transferred to the newly formed Pittsburg Conference.[125] The Erie District of this new conference was made up of the Erie, Chautauqua, Conewango, French Creek, Mercer and Mahoning circuits.[126] The New Castle circuit which touched Butler and Mercer counties,[127] on the south was a part of the Ohio district.[128]

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124 Gregg, HM, I, 279-280.
125 MAC, I, 449.
126 Gregg, HM, I, 224.
127 Brunson, LAB, 324.
128 Gregg, HM, I, 225.

During the following ten years several new circuits were formed and a number of changes were made in the names of the circuits. In 1826 the French Creek circuit became the Meadville while the Conewango was submerged in the Chautauqua and Lake circuits.[129] In the same year the Mahoning became the Shippensville[130] which is described as a large circuit in a new wilderness.[131] At this time this circuit was a part of the Pittsburg district[132] but in 1827 it was transferred to the Erie District.[133] In 1828 the Franklin and Youngsville Districts appear.[134] The Latter circuit was formed by a division of the Chautauqua circuit.[135] The Erie circuit became the Springfield in 1829.[136] The Clarion district was formed in 1830.[137] The Centreville circuit appears in 1831[138] and was formed out of portions of Mercer and New Castle circuits.[139] Cambridge was the name given the Meadville circuit in 1832.[140] The following year the Warren circuit appears while Brookville and Ridgway are listed as a mission formed

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129 Gregg, HM, I, 235.
130 Ibid, 235.
131 Ibid, 261.
132 Ibid, 236.
133 Ibid, 243.
134 Ibid, 253.
135 Ibid, 254.
136 Ibid, 264.
137 Ibid, 270.
138 Ibid, 280.
139 Ibid, 291.
140 Ibid, 291.

from a part of the Clarion circuit.[141] 1834 witnessed the formation of the Salem, Oil Creek, Harmonsburgh, Wesleyville, Columbus, Brookville, and Smethport circuits.[142] Ridgeway remained a mission.[143] The last year of this period found new missions at Shippensville and Tionesta[144] and new circuits were formed at Kenzua and Wattsburgh.[145] In 1833 the Harmony circuit was formed from the northern portion of the New Castle circuit.[146]

The first stations appear in this period. Meadville was the first to be formed.[147] It appears for the first time in 1832.[148] Mercer was the second permanent station in this ar area.[149] In 1834 Erie was made a station.[150]

The previously mentioned circuits served to spread Methodism throughout the area. Thirty-two new classes were formed in the ten years between 1825 and 1835.[151]

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141 Gregg, HM, I, 305-306.
142 Ibid, 321.
143 Ibid, 321.
144 Ibid, 336.
145 Ibid, 335-336.
146 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 732.
147 Gregg, HM, I, 291.
148 Ibid, 291.
149 Ibid, 305.
150 Ibid, 321.
151 1825: North Shenango (Gregg, Hm, I, 234); Pine Grove (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 513); Mount Jackson (Ibid, 563); Brady's Bend (Gregg, HM, I, 242). 1826: Luthersburg (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 541); Saegerstown (Ibid, 519); Spartansburgh (Ibid, 543). 1828: Clintonville (Ibid, 562); Springboro (Ibid, 562); Wesleyville (Ibid, 582); Brookville (Ibid, 232). 1829: Conneautville (Ibid, 596); Greenville (Ibid, 591); Troy (Gregg, HM, I, 269).

It will be noticed that over a third more classes were established in this ten year period than in the preceeding two periods covering twelve years.

Revivals and camp meetings now become a significant factor in the growth of Methodism in the area. Four were held in 1828 which resulted in about 400 new members becoming affiliated with the church.[152] The revival spirit was prevalent in 1834 and 1835 and over 500[153] were brought into the church as the result of special efforts at Salem, Columbus, Franklin, Punxsutawney,[154] Mercer,[155] Youngsville and Harmonsburg.[156]

Following 1833 there appear a number of indications of Methodist prosperity. In that year on the Meadville district it was estimated that 1000 persons were converted by the Methodists.[157] The North East circuit reported the reception

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1830: Sheajkeyville (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 619); Sugar Grove (Ibid, 598); Columbus (Ibid, 617); Corry (Ibid, 783). 1831: Oil Creek Furnace, now Oil City Trinity church (Ibid, II, 255); Centreville (Ibid, I, 613); Curllsville, now Sligo (Ibid, 615); Cherry Run (Ibid, 615-616); Espyville (Gregg, HM, I, 289). 1832: Knox (Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 678); Cambridgeboro, now Cambridge Springs (Ibid, 679); East Brady (Ibid, II, 304). 1833: Tyronville (Ibid, II, 673); West Middlesex (Ibid, II, 30). 1834: Harrisville (Ibid, I, 781); Centerville (Ibid, I, 781). 1835: Big Bend (Ibid, I, 784); Sharpsville (Ibid, I, 785).

152 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 519.
153 Gregg, HM, I, 317.
154 Ibid, 331.
155 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 729.
156 Gregg, HM, I, 352.
157 Ibid, 319.

of 130 new members[158] while the next year the newly formed Harmony circuit had 100 probationers.[159] About 100 were converted in 1835 at meetings held at Springfield and Girard.[160]

Many of these conversions were accompanied by marked physical manifestations. Such cases were quite frequent in the early days of Methodism in this area. Of one young woman converted it is said,

> She became so stiff in her joints that it was impossible to bend them, the sight of her eyes rolled back out of view, and no pulse was observable in her wrist. . . .She came to with the well-known language of "Glory to God!"[161]

In the case of a young man who was also converted at the Girard meeting it is said that,

> his father examined him, found his pulse regular, every joint as limber as a rag, and his breathing regular. . . .He came to about 2 o'clock A.M. He said he was happy, heard and understood most of what passed about him, but he could not see or move in any way hand or foot.[162]

In 1828 the first conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be held in this territory met at Salem (Previously Shenango).[163] The Pittsburg Conference convened here August 21 to 27 in conjunction with a camp meeting at which about one hundred conversions occurred. Salem was the site of the

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158 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 729.
159 Ibid, 732.
160 Gregg, HM, I, 332.
161 Ibid, 332.
162 Ibid, 333.
163 Ibid, 252.

first Methodist class in this area and the conference meeting here was presided over by the first leader of that class, Robert R. Roberts, who was now a bishop.[164] Five years later another conference session was held in this territory when the Pittsburg Conference met at Meadville in 1833.[165]

One of the most significant events of this era of Methodism transpired in 1833 when the Pittsburg Conference assumed control of Allegheny College. The College had been founded by the Presbyterian church in Western Pennsylvania and had been in under its exclusive control since its founding in 1815.[166] Lacking endowment the institution had led a sickly existence for a few years and was ultimately given up as a failure.[167] The college's board of trustees made a generous offer to the Pittsburg Conference in 1832 on the condition that the conference would pay off the accrued indebtedness and place the college in a healthy, prosperous condition.[168] The conference in its session at Meadville took over the control of the college and opened its preparatory department in September of that year and the college department in November.[169]

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164 Gregg, HM, I, 252.
165 Ibid, 304.
166 Ibid, 316.
167 Ibid, 316.
168 Ibid, 316.
169 Ibid, 316.

Methodism became active in two movements of the day. Temperance preaching was in evidence through these years.[170] Such preaching gave offense to rumdrinkers and rumsellers who were numerous in both church and communities.[171]

During the conference year of 1835 agitation was commenced on the slavery question.[172] Such agitation caused a sharp division of opinion in the conference.[173] Those who opposed the anti-slavery agitation did so not because they were in favor of slavery but because they did not admit to its necessary and universal sinfulness or believe in the practicability or expediency of universal and unconditional emancipation.[174] Not a small amount of this reaction was caused by the spirit, language, and irregularities of the abolitionists.[175] This was but the beginning of a long struggle within the conference which will be considered at greater length in the subsequent chapter.

During the late eighteen twenties and early thirties a number of religious disorders appeared to disturb the American religious scene. The year 1828 was memorable in Methodist history for it marked the succession of the "Radical Party" and the formation of the "Protestant Methodist Church" follow-

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170 Gregg, HM, I, 306.
171 Ibid, 307.
172 Ibid, 337.
173 Ibid, 339.
174 Ibid, 339.
175 Ibid, 319.

ing the General Conference held in Pittsburg.

> This secession did not affect us injuriously within the bounds of the Erie Conference as in some other portions of the Church; but yet in a few prominent places the work was seriously embarrased for several years.[176]

While the pressure of Campbellism was felt chiefly in the Western Reserve of Ohio[177] it undoubtedly penetrated the neighboring territory of Pennsylvania and what was true in the Western Reserve was probably true for the section along the Ohio border in Pennsylvania although perhaps to a lesser degree.

> The Methodist ministry on the "Western Reserve" harnessed themselves for the conflict, and engaged in the controversy with a zest and zeal which indicated both talents of a superior order and an unflinching regard for "the truth as it is in Jesus." Seeing the wrong use that was being made of water, they seemed the more in earnest for the baptism of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. At camp-meetings, quarterly meetings, and on all occasions, this seemed to be the constant theme of all the preachers. Under such preaching revivals of religion were frequent and powerful. Our people, too, were clearer in their views of Christian experience in consequence of having the subject discussed so much, and with such ability.[178]

Of the New Divinity Movement Gregg writes:

> The Presbyterian and Congregational Churches were extensively engaged at this time in holding protracted meetings, which lasted sometimes three or four weeks, with a great amount of religious excitement, and resulting in many additions to their Churches.

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176 Gregg, HM, I, 252.
177 Ibid, 229.
178 Ibid, 230.

> Evangelists were employed who possessed talents peculiarly fitted for such meetings; denouncing the old Calvinistic dogmas, and running to the opposite extreme of Pelagianism, giving to the sinner a "natural ability" to turn himself to God at pleasure. Their zeal at these meetings ran clear beyond what they had so long complained of among the Methodists. . . .While these Churches were in this way being greatly strengthened, our preachers and people were by no means idle. Our ministers, expert in argument, made a general telling attack upon this "new divinity", which saved the country, and the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches themselves, from rushing headlong into Pelagianism; and in the meantime revivals of religion were everywhere prevalent among us.[179]

By this time Roman Catholicism had appeared in the area. Some concept of the Catholic attitude toward Methodism can be gathered from the following incident.

> Once when Mr. Coston was on his way to a quarterly meeting at Curllsville he missed his way and night was coming on, he was obliged to sleep at a house where the family were Roman Catholics. They positively refused to put him on the right road, or to allow him to stay all night. But he assured them that he must stay, as he could not find the road in the dark. They then refused him any supper; but one of the girls managed to get him some privately.[180]

The task of the itinerants, as one can see from what has preceded, was not easy. Not only were they compelled to suffer much in the way of physical discomfort and inadequate remuneration but also had much to contend with in the form of denominational animosities and ecclesiastical competition. Yet the early Methodist itinerants in this area appeared to have

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179 Gregg, HM, I, 275-276.
180 Ibid, 308.

been more than equal to any situation which confronted them and were always ready and able to preach the gospel where and whenever circumstances might conspire to provide the opportunity. Of formal education they possessed little but a native logic and a constant reading of religious works fitted them well for their work in this rude section. However, much credit for the success of the work is due to the courageous help mates of these men for in those days "there was no class of women on earth more earnestly devoted and self-sacrificing than the wives of the Methodist preachers."[181] It is interesting to note that in this early period two doctors forsook their practices to join the itinerancy. Elkarah Steadman remained with the itinerants[182] but Samuel Ayers after traveling a few years resumed his practice but remained in the local connection.[183]

Having watched the planting of Methodism in this territory and watched its spread and increase during these early years prior to the formation of the Erie Annual Conference we are now ready to pass on to the next chapter and observe the formation of the new conference and observe its fortunes in its earliest years of existence.

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181 Gregg, HM, I, 607.
182 Ibid, 344.
183 Ibid, 294.

CHAPTER IV

1836--1866 - THE PERIOD COVERING THE YEARS FROM THE FORMATION OF THE ERIE ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR

The current chapter has as its aim the presentation of the happenings relative to the formation of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the recording of those events which befell Methodism in the area during the subsequent thirty years. To this latter end, mention will be made of the various activities of the church and the attitudes of the Conference in their many endeavors, reference will be made to conditions as they existed in the country in those years together with their effect upon Methodism. The itinerants of the period will be considered in an effort to picture the type of leadership which was characteristic of the church of that day. Finally, a brief description is provided of the status of Methodism at the end of the period.

A. The Formation of the Erie Annual Conference.

By the year 1836 Methodism had gained sufficient strength in northwestern Pennsylvania, in the adjoining Western Reserve of Ohio, and in the adjacent counties of Chautauqua and Cattaragus in the State of New York, to warrant the formation of

a separate conference for the administration of Church polity in these areas. To this end, the Pittsburg Conference, meeting in July, 1835, passed resolutions requesting the General Conference of 1836 to divide its territory, by drawing a line from its western boundary, along the southern line of the Western Reserve, in Ohio, and thence due east to the Allegheny river, and thence up the Mahoning river to the eastern boundary of the Pittsburg Conference.[1] In accordance with this request, the General Conference, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, in May, 1836, formed the twenty-third conference of American Methodism which was designated as the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[2]

> The boundaries of the new Erie Conference were described as follows: "The Erie Conference shall be bounded on the north by Lake Erie, on the east by a line commencing at the mouth of Cattaragus creek; thence to the Allegheny river, at the mouth of Tunanquant creek; thence up said creek eastward, to the ridge dividing between the waters of the Clarion and Sinnemahoning creek; thence eastward to the head of Mahoning creek to the Allegheny river; thence across said river in a northwesterly direction to the Western Reserve line, including the north part of Butler and New Castle Circuits, west to the Ohio canal; thence along said Canal to Lake Erie, including Ohio City."[3]

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1 Gregg, Samuel, The History of Methodism within the Bounds of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. II, New York, Nelson and Phillips, 1873, p. 12.
2 Gregg, HM, II, 12.
3 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 791-792.

B. The First Session of the Erie Conference.

The new Conference convened for the first time on Wednesday morning the 17th of August, 1836, at Meadville, Pennsylvania, with Bishop Soule presiding.[4] The following itinerants answered the first roll call.

Isaac Winans	Arthur M. Brown
Ralph Clapp	John W. Hill
Martin Ruter	John C. Ayers
Homer J. Clark	Benjamin Preston
Joseph S. Barris	Caleb Brown
Joseph W. Davis	Allured Plimpton
John Robinson	William Butt
Daniel Ritchey	Ira Eddy
John Chandler	Hiram Gilmore
William Todd	William Carroll
David Preston	Thomas Jennings
William Swayze	Jacob Jinks
Ignatius Tackett	E. K. Steadman
Billings C. Plimpton	Hiram Luce
Thomas Carr	Samuel W. Ingraham
John J. Steadman	John L. Holmes
John Luccock	Daniel Stearns
Francis A. Dighton	Thomas Stubbs
Ahab Kellar	James Gilmore
Daniel Prichard	John Scott
Alfred Sturgis	Lorenzo D. Prosser
Samuel Gregg	

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Three of the five districts of the newly formed Erie Conference contained appointments within the bounds of northwestern Pennsylvania. They were the Meadville, Erie, and Jamestown districts.[6] The first appointments made by the Conference in this area are as follows:

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[4] MTS (1836), 3.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Gregg, HM, II, 32-33.

Meadville District, Joseph S. Barris, Presiding Elder.
Allegheny College, M. Ruter, H. J. Clark, Wm. M. Burton, Professors, and B. O. Plimpton, Agent.
Meadville, E. Burket.
Franklin, C. Brown, J. Proser.
Centerville, R. Peck, W. B. Lloyd.
Mercer, G. W. Clarke.
Salem, A. Keller, C. C. Best.
Clarksville, Wm. Carrol, H. S. Hitchcock.
Lawrenceburgh, (Parker's Landing), D. Prichard.
Brookville, J. A. Hallock, J. R. Locke.
Shippensville, S. W. Ingraham, J. F. Hill.
New Castle, E. B. Hill, T. Graham.

Jamestown District, Hiram Kingsley, Presiding Elder.
Kinzua, J. Gilmore.
Warren, S. Gregg.
Youngsville, I. H. Tacket, T. Stowe, E. P. Steadman.
Wattsburgh, H. Luce, H. N. Stearns.

Erie District, John Chandler, Presiding Elder.
Erie, R. A. Aylworth.
Wesleyville, L. D. Mix, A. Hall.
North East, D. Preston, C. D. Rockwell.
Cambridge, J. H. Whallon, P. D. Horton.
Randolph, Wm. Butt.
Harmonsburgh, B. Preston, W. Griffith.
Springfield, J. Bain, S. Leach.
Oil Creek and Tionesta, J. E. Chapen, L. Janney.[7]

C. The Growth and Expansion of Methodism.

The new Conference set itself to the task of enlivening and extending Methodism in the area. In this endeavor it appears to have been favored with much success. While statistics are unobtainable which would indicate the number of Methodists in the territory at the time that the Conference was formed, by 1865, the closing year of the period, 13,800

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[7] Gregg, HM, II, 32-33.

persons were affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church.[8]

A somewhat better concept of the activity of the new Conference may be gathered from a review of the number of classes formed during these years. Prior to 1836 eighty classes are recorded as having been formed. During the thirty years between 1836 and 1866 between eighty-three and one hundred sixteen classes were established. Only eighty-three classes are recorded as having been formed, but insofar as there are 196 churches recorded in 1865[9] and inasmuch as the class was the basis of local church organization it would appear that the larger number of classes had been established. The problem is somewhat further complicated by the absence of the designation of the location of all these churches by the "Minutes" which are content to list only the number of churches connected with each appointment.

The chief medium of church expansion appears to have been the camp meeting and the revival. During these years they were everywhere prevalent and appear to have served not only as a device for the winning of new church members but also as a popular medium of religious expression. There seems to have been considerable opposition to these gatherings and not infrequently they were the scenes of other than religious dis-

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[8] MEC, VII, ii, 44-45.
[9] Ibid.

turbance. One such incident is described in the following way:

> As night drew on Saturday a host of restless, howling animals, in the form of young men and boys beset the encampment, who (it would appear from their conduct) had just been dismissed from the rear guard of pandemonium to go up and encompass the camp of saints and plague the faithful seed. Large boastings and threatenings had been spent of what they would do but it would seem that an Almighty and prevading spirit had fixed the bounds over which they did not pass.[10]

Similar situations are recorded and at times it became necessary for the preachers to demonstrate their physical prowess. Such a situation developed in 1850 at a camp meeting near Tylersburg where there were perhaps more than the usual number of roughs in attendance.

> One of their number stood near where there were several Methodist ministers and was heard to boast: "I can whip any Methodist preacher on the ground." James Gilfillan, then a local preacher, standing by, said "John, you had better be careful. I am a Methodist preacher." At once the drunken, boasting fellow seized a club and "went for" the preacher. Mr. Gilfillan straightened his right arm from the shoulder and sent the bully about ten feet under the fire stand.[11]

Often, however, such disturbances could be quieted by the simple expedient of a subtle confiscation of the supplies of liquors which the disrupting factions brought with them.[12]

Many of the camp meetings and revivals extended over a

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[10] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 93.
[11] Ibid, 436.
[12] Ibid, 363.

considerable period of time. At Springfield in 1847 one continued for seventy-two days and resulted in one hundred eighteen new members becoming affiliated with the church.[13] Meetings of five weeks duration were not exceptional and many of longer duration are recorded.

Varying degrees of success attended the revival and camp meeting efforts. In many instances it would appear that many of the accessions to church membership were heads of families which later became stable and useful members of the church.[14] On one district in the year of 1858-59, 1,300 conversions were reported.[15] Success did not always accompany evangelistic efforts, however, and there is recorded one meeting which continued for three weeks without a single conversion.[16]

The following description is perhaps typical of camp meeting activities.

> For five successive weeks we tented in the grove; they were eventful and memorable occasions to every man; the revival fire spread from there more or less over the district; the power and spirit and glory of God were signally manifested on these assemblages of worshippers in the forest; the best of order was observed at every place. Several sites of ground for camp meetings have been leased for a term of years and very appropriately arranged and prepared with seats, tents, wells, and other paraphernalia for the accommodation of the people.[17]

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[13] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 188.
[14] Ibid, 56.
[15] Ibid, 383.
[16] Ibid, 349.
[17] Ibid, 383.

The year 1845 is to be noted insofar as reference is first made to the Cherry Run Camp Meeting which has had a continuous existence until the present.[18]

The growth and expansion of the church was accompanied by church building activities and the number of church buildings erected in this period are too numerous to mention.

D. Church and Conference Activities and Attitudes.

Insofar as the polity of Methodism is of the connectional type it is impossible to separate the activities and attitudes of the individual churches and those of the Conference inasmuch as the action of the latter body to a large extent determines and is determined by the attitudes and activities of the individual congregations which are associated through their pastors with the Conference. The attitudes which the Conference displays and the type of activity expected of its members finds ready reflection in the resolutions adopted by that body and in this manner such become a commentary upon the religious life of the church. A review of the Church and Conference Activities and Attitudes reflected in this period serves to acquaint one with the true temper of the Methodism of the period.

Popular amusements were a religious taboo to the

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[18] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 320.

Methodism of these years. Dancing, "so-called" social parties, and shows were regarded as dangerous to Christian character.[19] The latter were especially avoided and the feeling of the Church in the matter is well reflected in the following resolution which was passed by the Conference of 1849.

> Whereas, Caravan exhibitions have usually connected with them circus performances and comical feats as well as other evils, Resolved, therefore, That we most solemnly warn all our preachers and members to refrain entirely from such places of amusement, believing an attendance at such places greatly retards the work of grace in our own hearts and among others.[20]

The maintainence of the Puritan type of Sabbath was a matter of grave concern to the Methodist of that day. The following resolutions are samples of the attitude of the Church in this connection.

> . . .The Committee was instructed to address our people on the subject (Sabbath Observance) especially in relation to cheese-making, lumbering, iron-making, and in relation to visiting post offices for letters, papers, and touching the unnecessary traveling of both preachers and people, etc., etc.[21]

> Resolved, That we respectfully petition the Post Master General of these United States praying the discontinuance of the mail upon the Sabbath days between Buffalo and Cleveland and that we unite in common with our fellow citizens on our respective charges to petition for the same desired object.[22]

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19 MEC, V, i, 11.
20 MTS (1849), 233.
21 MTS (1848), 210-211.
22 MTS (1848), 214.

During this period science was fast coming to a position of emminence and in so doing did not escape the censure of the Church. "Methodist ministers were not in sympathy with discoveries in science which no meet with their unqualified endorsement" and science was accorded derision in both church and in the class rooms of Allegheny College.[23]

Temperance work claimed the attention of the Church to an increasing degree throughout these years. While there appeared evidences of spasmodic temperance preaching prior to this period there is no record of any concentrated opposition to the liquor industry as it then existed.

> In the old "Discipline" nothing was said against the traffic in intoxicating liquors; hence members of the Methodist Episcopal Church were engaged in keeping taverns and selling liquor in them, and also in selling it in their stores and groceries as common as any other article of trade, and of drinking it themselves in many instances even to drunkenness, and the church had to bear the scandal. The writer of these pages, in the early years of his itinerancy, has often been compelled to put up at Methodist taverns where drinking and noisy carousals were kept up until a late hour at night, and if a word of reproof was uttered, the preacher might expect to be short about one dollar that year in his quarterage.[24]

The first evidence of the Conference taking a definite stand in matter of temperance appears in the "Minutes" of 1839 when the group unaminously concurred to endorse the New

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[23] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 82.
[24] Gregg, HM, II, 104-105.

York resolutions.[25] These resolutions, which consisted of a request to the General Conference of 1840, were designed to make the rules of the Church relative to the use of liquor conform with those originally laid down by the founder of Methodism.[26] Their content is as follows:

> Resolved, that the next General Conference be earnestly and respectfully requested and impowered, so to alter the General Rules of the United Societies that the item respecting drunkenness may read as Mr. Wesley framed it, which is in the following language, viz: Drunkness, buying, or selling spiritous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.[27]

The failure of the General Conference to provide the requested alteration so as to exclude from the fellowship of Methodism the men who both drank and sold liquor had a near disastrous effect upon the interests of the Church in this area.[28]

> The temperance reformation was sweeping like a tornado over the land, mostly controlled and led on by reformed drunkards--irreligious men, who were disposed to deal tremendous blows upon rum-selling and rum-drinking Christians, and upon the Church in which they were harbored. The Methodist Episcopal Church at this time occupied a position which rendered her peculiarly objectionable to both Abolition and Temperance lecturers, and the country was full of them, and they embraced every opportunity to assail her. Under these circumstances it was hard for her ministers to make headway.[29]

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25 MTS (1839), 40.
26 MTS (1839), 40.
27 MTS (1839), 40.
28 Gregg, HM, II, 123-124.
29 Ibid.

However, by 1844 the matter of temperance had become of such concern to the conference as to warrant a special temperance meeting during the Conference session of that year.[30] A year later, in 1845, when the General Conference recommended the aforementioned substitution of Mr. Wesley's rule, the proposal met with the unanimous approval of the Erie Conference.[31]

The cause of temperance went forward rapidly in the Conference and at the session of 1850 the temperance committee made the following report which serves to outline the course of local Methodist temperance action.

> That we recommend a mild but strict enforcement of our rules on the subject of temperance.
>
> That we as ministers of Christ will use our influence privately and publicly to put a stop to the manufacturing, sale, and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and to rescue the dram drinker from the drunkard's grave and the drunkard's hell.
>
> That as early as practicable in this Conference year, each preacher be requested to preach or lecture to the children of his charge on the subject of temperance, at such time and place as will in his judgment accomplish the most good.
>
> That it is a censurable offence for any member of our church as a member of a board of excise or a judge of a civil court to grant license for the sale of intoxicating liquors, or any member to sign petition for such license.[32]

By 1852 the Conference was seeking temperance legislation

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[30] MTS (1844), 102.
[31] MTS (1845), 121.
[32] MTS (1850), 260.

"to protect society against this fearful evil" and pledging its support to the enforcement of the same.[33] In 1854 the first demands for a prohibitory law appears in the Conference when it was resolved that,

> In the judgment of this conference nothing short of the prohibition of the traffic in ardent spirits, as a beverage, can meet the wants of this country, and we will use our influence in all practical ways on all suitable occasions to bring about a desireable result.[34]

In subsequent years temperance sentiment grew and manifested itself in numerous ways. Conference members would not support candidates for public office who did not support the temperance cause.[35] To sell grain to distillers or to sign the petition of an innkeeper for a liquor license was viewed as a betrayal of Christian principle.[36] By 1862 it had become inconsistent for the friends of temperance to give their patronage to men in any department of business who were in any way connected with the liquor traffic.[37] More than ever the Methodists now became opposed to the use of "poisonous" wines at the communion table and the use of the unfermented juice of the grape was recommended.[38] It became the duty of ministers to preach and lecture in behalf of temperance whenever

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33 MTS (1850), 310.
34 MTS (1854), 366.
35 MTS (1854), 366.
36 MEC, V, iv, 18.
37 MEC, VI, ii, 16.
38 MEC, VI, ii, 16.

and wherever the proper opportunity was afforded.[39] In addition it became the duty of all Methodists to circulate temperance propaganda and tracts.[40]

The tobacco habit likewise was discountenanced by the Methodists of those days for the Conference of 1859 felt that the use of tobacco was "filthy" and "offensive" and begged both ministers and members to use none, "especially in the church."[41] There seems due cause for this injunction, for a number of the early itinerants and "good sized quids of tobacco" were inseparable companions even in the pulpit.[42]

An active part was played by the Church in the dissemination of Methodist literature. Chief among the religious journals which merited the active and sympathetic support of the Conference were the "Pittsburgh Christian Advocate,"[43] the "Sunday School Advocate,"[44] and the "Missionary Advocate."[45] Extensive subscription campaigns were conducted throughout the region by the Conference in behalf of these publications.

The Conference, through its constitutent churches, was likewise active in the Tract Cause. So important was this

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39 MTS (1855), 398.
40 MTS (1853), 339.
41 MEC, V, iv, 13.
42 Gregg, HM, II, 36.
43 MTS (1844), 115.
44 MTS (1842), 75.
45 MTS (1850), 257.

activity that Church members were encouraged to affiliate with Tract Societies and to take an active part in the support of the enterprize. A portion of the report of the Conference Tract Committee which was adopted by the Conference on 1845 is here included to reveal the nature of this undertaking.

> The tract enterprize is one of so great importand to the church, and the world, that it demands the special attention and efforts of all our ministers.
>
> It shall be the duty of the preacher in charge of each circuit or station to form a tract society at each of his appointments where it is practicable.
>
> Each person subscribing and paying twenty-five cents shall become a member of the tract society, and shall be entitled to 250 pages of tracts for his own use, or at the rate of ten pages for each cent he shall subscribe and pay.[46]

In situations where it was inexpedient to form Tract Societies it was expected that the preachers would take collections for the express purpose of purchasing and distributing tracts.[47]

This type of activity met with much success and by 1850 the good already accomplished by tract distribution was adjudged worthy of renewed and persevering efforts in this undertaking.[48] When the period came to a close in 1865 the tract program was reported as progressing and was marked by increased financial assistance and the Conference rededicated itself to the task at hand and pledged to the cause its undiminished

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[46] MTS (1845), 124.
[47] MTS (1849), 225.
[48] MTS (1850), 258.

confidence and increased support.[49]

The Conference was active in its cooperation with the American Bible Society. As early as 1843 the body gave its hearty approval to the efforts of this Society in its endeavors to give universal circulation to the Scriptures without note or comment, and at this time it extended its congratulations to the Society upon its previous success.[50] At the same time the ministers were charged with the duty of presenting the Bible Cause to their respective congregations and instructed to cooperate with the agents of the Society.[51] Cooperation with the Society continued throughout the period and at its end efforts were being made to increase collections for this purpose and the Church was becoming connected with the county and local organizations and with its special agents for the promotion of this work.

It is of interest to note that the Methodists were much concerned about the reading matter furnished the soldiers of the northern army and the Conference of 1863 recommended the sending of books and periodicals to the soldiers in the field, camp and hospital;[52] commending our book agents for furnishing the literature of our Church.

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49 MEC, VII, ii, 25-26.
50 MTS (1843), 93-94.
51 MTS (1843), 94.
52 MEC, VI, iv, 13.

Of more than passing interest is the Conference's approval of a plan to publish the complete works of James Arminius, D. D.[53] Such a venture was considered as a "valuable contribution to theological literature."[54]

Education, both religious and secular, claimed the attention of Methodism in these years. In the field of religious education the Church devoted itself to the extension and improvement of the Sunday School movement. The first session of the Erie Conference passed the following resolution:

> Resolved, That the members of this conference are expected to give special attention to the formation and encouragement of Sabbath Schools.[55]

Gregg, commenting upon the condition of the Sabbath Schools at the beginning of the period, makes the following comment.

> A very few Sabbath-schools were scattered through our work. The preachers generally had not been trained in these schools, and knew but little about managing them, and had too much else to do on their large circuits to be able to give them much attention; and while the above resolution was passed without opposition, it was also permitted to lie on the conference journals without much attention. It required years of patient toil on the part of a few earnest Sabbath-school workers to secure any thing like a general effort among the pastors to promote this great and important Church interest, and never until children nurtured in Sunday-schools became converted and entered the ministry did this institution receive the pastoral oversight its great importance demands.[56]

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53 MTS (1852), 304.
54 MTS (1852), 304.
55 MTS (1836), 11.
56 Gregg, HM, II, 41-42.

By 1848 the Sunday School Movement seems to have gathered impetus and the temper of the endeavor is clearly evidenced in the resolutions which were adopted by the Conference of that year.

> That it is the sense of this Conference that the Sunday School cause is an important auxiliary to the success of the ministry and therefore demands our fostering care and hearty co-operation as ministers of Christ.
>
> That we have undiminished confidence in the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church and will raise money to aid its funds.
>
> That we recommend the continuance of our Sabbath Schools through the winter when it is practicable.
>
> That we will as far as possible introduce into all our schools the Wesleyan Catechism, circulate the Sunday School Advocate, and advise our people to furnish their libraries (Sabbath School) with our publications in preference to others.[57]

It is to be noted that preachers were required to preach sermons, "particularly to children," in an effort to "enforce upon their tender minds the importance of early piety and conversion to God."[58] By the year 1850 increased efforts were being made to shape the character of posterity for piety and the work of God through the medium of the Sunday School.[59] Nevertheless, there appears to have been a decline in the interest and activity of the movement in the middle fifties,[60]

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57 MTS (1848), 204-205.
58 MTS (1845), 129.
59 MTS (1850), 259.
60 MEC, V, ii, 15.

but by 1858 an improvement is noted and an increase in interest recorded.[61] The closing years of the period found the Sunday Schools in a healthy and prospering condition for in 1865 the 259 recorded Sunday Schools in the region claimed a membership of 21,100.[62]

Some effort appears to have been made to effect religious education in the common schools of the day.[63] In the year 1849 the following resolution appears in the "Minutes."

> That it shall be the duty of all the preachers to visit the district schools on their charges and seek by all prudent means to promote the moral and religious culture of the young.[64]

Secular education likewise claimed the efforts of Methodism for relationships with institutions of higher learning are clearly observable. Chief among these institutions was Allegheny College of which some mention has been made in the preceeding chapter. In the year of the formation of the Conference the Methodists were faced with the task of refinancing this institution. The financial picture of the college in 1836 was such that the Methodists of this area were compelled to seek the assistance of the remainder of the Erie Conference and of the Pittsburg Conference in an effort to provide the necessary funds for the continued operation of the college.[65]

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61 MEC, V, iii, 13.
62 MEC, VII, ii, 44-45.
63 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 67.
64 MTS (1849), 230.
65 MTS (1836), 8.

Without endowment the college was able to struggle along for a few years depending for support upon the small tuition fees and the meager collections made in the Conference to cancel her debts, care for her upkeep, and to support the faculty.[66] By 1839 a crisis was reached and the college demanded an adequate endowment or the college would pass from Methodist Control.[67] The celebration of the Centenary of Methodism was made the occasion of an unsuccessful attempt to provide an initial endowment of $10,000.[68] Less than $1,000 accrued to the Centenary fund during its first year of operation and but one-half went for "liberal education;" the remainder being equally divided between the missionary cause and the care of superannuated preachers.[69]

All plans for the endowment of the institution prior to 1843 met with failure and by that year the college was running into increased debt while its original debt and accumulated interest remained unpaid.[70] At the same time the State Legislature withdrew its patronage and legal steps were inaugurated to remove the college from Methodist ownership.[71] The situation became so serious in the spring of this year that the

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66 Gregg, HM, II, 106.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid, 226.
71 Ibid, 226-227.

educational activities were suspended for a year[72] while the faculty took to the field in search of endowment.[73] These men were to remain unpaid until $75,000 was assured but the Conference members in 1844 undertook to underwrite their salaries from their own meager incomes.[74] An endowment was finally secured by the creation of stock to the amount of $100,000 which was divided into shares of $25; each share carrying with it the right of perpetual scholarship.[75] By 1846 $90,000 had been subscribed[76] but it would appear that not more than two-thirds of this amount was ever realized.[77] However, scholarship notes were still being issued in 1848 and in that year their price was raised to $35[78] and in 1854 the price was increased to $100.[79] This means of endowment met with success sufficient to place the college beyond the realm of financial embarrassment by 1852.[80]

Throughout these years education at Allegheny was conducted upon liberal principles. In the "Minutes" of 1847 there appears the following resolution,

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72 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 749.
73 Gregg, HM, II, 227.
74 Ibid, 231.
75 MTS (1843), 91.
76 MTS (1846), 163.
77 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 748.
78 MTS (1848), 208.
79 MTS (1854), 367.
80 MTS (1852), 311.

> That the institution shall be conducted as the charter requires, on liberal principles, no person having any advantage or being subjected to any disadvantage on account of his religious views.[81]

Plans for a Bible department at the college were made as early as 1852[82] but such did not become a reality until 1855.[83]

Allegheny College appears to have prospered in the 1850's for in 1857 it was said that,

> Allegheny college in respect to able instruction, sound scholarship, and a high degree of religious prosperity takes rank with the very first of our literary institutions.[84]

A forward step was taken by the Conference of 1858 which lent its approval to a resolution approving of the admission of females to college classes whenever found practicable.[85]

Late in the period, the following appeared as a portion of the educational report of the Conference:

> The attendance, though somewhat less than in former years, is flattering. Within the last three years the college has furnished its "full quota" of young men, strong in muscle and in mind to the loyal army of our ministry. Others, with the unmistakeable mark of "honorable discharge" have entered college to secure the necessary drill for successful service in civil life.[86]

The closing years of the period saw the future of the institution assured, for it was attracting widespread interest

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81 MTS (1847), 181-182.
82 MTS (1852), 342.
83 MTS (1855), 396.
84 MEC, V, ii, 10.
85 MEC, V, iii, 11.
86 MEC, VII, i, 10.

and people of wealth were liberally contributing to its activities.[87]

Definite relationships appear to have been established by the Conference and Juliette Academy located at Albion, Pennsylvania. In 1843 it was offered to the Conference by its board of trustees and was accepted only to the degree of providing it with an able principal and commending to the patronage and confidence of the Church.[88] However, in 1846, the Conference went so far as to recommend it to the patronage of the public.[89]

Late in this period the Church became interested in the development of Clarion Male and Female Seminary. As early as 1859 the citizens of Clarion and vicinity had taken preliminary steps to build a seminary, "to be placed under the patronage and control of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church."[90] The enterprize was lacking in impetus and the institution received but a feeble start during this period.

An educational attitude of the Conference which requires mention is that which conceived it a matter of the highest importance to provide for the education of free people of color.[91]

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87 MEC, VII, ii, 19.
88 Gregg, HM, II, 206.
89 MTS (1846), 164.
90 MEC, V, iii, 4.
91 MTS (1855), 395.

In this connection it is to be observed that the Conference voiced its approval of the endeavors of Wilburforce and extended to that work such financial assistance as they were able.[92]

The Methodism of the region was much concerned with the spread of Christianity and the first session of the Erie Annual Conference witnessed the formation of a Missionary Society.[93] This Society was chiefly concerned with the raising of monies for the promotion of the larger mission enterprizes of Methodism and sought so to do through the medium of penny-a-week collections.[94] It was not until 1845 that the Constitution of the Conference Missionary Society was adopted.[95]

One year later the formation of auxiliary missionary societies in the various circuits was recommended as a means of furthering the missionary cause.[96] These societies were to be formed as conditions permitted and membership was open to all who would contribute a penny a week or fifty cents a year and a contribution of five dollars made one a member of the society for life.[97]

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92 MEC, V, ii, 16; iii, 11.
93 Gregg, HM, II, 40.
94 MTS (1842), 72.
95 MTS (1845), 131.
96 MTS (1845), 131.
97 MTS (1845), 131.

The Conference was also interested in a number of other mission undertakings. In 1847 it "extended its cooperation to the Western Seamen's Friend Society in its laudable efforts to extend the gospel to Western watermen."[98] In northwestern Pennsylvania itself it lent support to a German mission in Erie[99] and recommended a mission to the sailors of that city.[100] The Conference recommended that the Mission Board of the Church at large follow the conquering armies into the south and southwest and pledged itself to assume its portion of the expenditures incurred in any such undertaking.[101]

Plans were laid for monthly missionary meetings in each of the churches of the region as early as 1850.[102] At these gatherings lectures were presented, missionary intelligence disseminated, and missionary collections received.[103]

Certain Conference resolutions are worthy of notice insofar as they reveal the temper of the missionary movement. These were adopted by the Conference of 1863.

> That we will diligently cultivate in ourselves and in our congregations habits of systematic beneficence.
>
> That we will, more than ever, seek to acquire and diffuse missionary intelligence.

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98 MTS (1847), 195.
99 MTS (1852), 399.
100 MTS (1852), 339.
101 MEC, VI, iii, 11.
102 MTS (1850), 257.
103 MTS (1850), 257.

> That wherever it is possible we will execute fully the provisions of the Discipline for the support of missions.
>
> That we will endeavor to bring the amount raised annually for missions to the average of one dollar per member.[104]

In the closing year of the period a fifty percent increase over the preceeding years missionary collections is recorded and there was no retrogression in the contributions and collections for this activity during the Civil War.[105]

Relatively unimportant, but nevertheless revealing the nature of the Methodism of the period are certain Methodist customs and church practices. These are intimately connected with the doctrines and discipline of the Church and serve to give a certain denominational distinction and unity. A number of the resolutions on Church Usages passed by the Conference of 1858 are particularly helpful to an understanding of the Methodism of the period. These resolutions contain the following items:

> That rather than re-baptize persons we should kindly labor to remove their erroneous views on the mode, subject or design of Christian baptism; as auxiliary to this purpose, would recommend a wide circulation of our able publication on this subject, believing that persons properly enlightened will not desire rebaptism.
>
> That we most affectionately and conscientiously advise our stewards to procure the pure juice of

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104 MEC, VI, iv, 14-15.
105 MEC, VII, ii, 23-24.

the grape to be invariably used in the administration of the Lord's Supper.

That we earnestly recommend our members to observe the proper, and, as we think, the scriptural posture of kneeling in time of prayer.

That the appointing power of the Church should remain unembarrassed, by either the ministry or membership.

That whatever else is according to "sound doctrine" in the usages of the church, we will observe, believing it is better for us to keep our rules than to mend them.[106]

Other resolutions passed at other sessions of the Conference are to be noted also. From the action of the Conference of 1845 it appears that the class meeting was not commanding the full respect of either layman or itinerant and in that year it was resolved that preachers should not be required to serve so many appointments as would prevent their meeting classes and in addition class leaders were instructed to devote more attention to incidental matters relevant to class discipline.[107]

At this same session of the Conference resolutions were passed demanding that preachers be required to discourage the use of instrumental music in the performance of public worship.[108] However, four years later, in 1849, the Conference required its preachers to encourage congregational singing in

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106 MEC, V, iii, 15.
107 MTS (1845), 139.
108 MTS (1849), 232.

all the places of worship within the bounds of the Conference.[109]

The Conference of 1862 recommended strict and punctual attendance at all services, considered it unbecoming to wear hats in church, viewed as indiscreet the practice of engaging in conversation or loud laughter after church service.[110] It also suggested that the choir lead the singing and advised that men and women be allowed to sit together in family groups.[111] The latter suggestion was made in the interests of better religious education and the maintainence of better order in the service.[112]

E. The Effect of Secular Conditions Upon Methodism.

Events which colored the national scene in the days before and during the Civil War were readily mirrored in the life and thought of the Church. Many years prior to the civil conflict the issue which lay at its cause conditioned the activities of Methodism. Mention has been already made in the previous chapter concerning the earliest appearances of abolitionism in the Church of this area. During the years which followed it grew to proportions which threatened the well

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109 MTS (1849) 232.
110 MEC, VI, iii, 13.
111 MEC, VI, iii, 13.
112 MEC, VI, iii, 13.

being of the Methodism of the day. Abolition sentiment had so far developed by 1837 that an anti-slavery society was formed which was reputed to bear the initial of the Conference. The body at its session of that year, however, disclaimed any connection with any such society.[113] Feeling grew more intense during the following year and the slavery question became a constant theme of conversation and debate among the preachers.[114] Both pro- and anti-abolition groups were nearly equal in strength and were apprehensive of the activities of each other.[115] At the convocation of the Conference in 1838 the anti-abolitionists possessed enough strength to secure the adoption of the following resolution by a majority of six.[116]

> That while it disclaims all intentions of interfering with any man's private opinions, and while, as the Discipline says, we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery, we judge it incompatible with the duties and obligations of Methodist preachers to spend their time in delivering abolition lectures, contributing to and the getting up of abolition meetings or in attending abolition conventions or in circulating abolition papers.[117]

Subsequent to the passage of this resolution, the clash was brought into critical focus by the action of John S. Barris, then Presiding Elder of the Meadville District, who,

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113 MTS (1837), 20.
114 Gregg, HM, II, 74-75.
115 Gregg, HM, II, 75.
116 MTS (1838), 25.
117 MTS (1838), 25.

when speaking on a Sunday evening in a Congregational Church in Painesville, Ohio, during the season when the Annual Conference was convening in that town, delivered an abolition lecture. Barris was charged with insubordination to the constituted authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the following specifications:

> Disobedience to the advice of the General Conference in lecturing and agitating the subject of abolitionism the past year.
>
> For contempt of this conference by getting up and presiding at an abolition meeting on Thursday, the 9th instant, and in delivering an abolition lecture, under the pretense of preaching a Gospel sermon, in the Congregational Church in this place on Sabbath evening last.
>
> In giving leave to the preacher in charge of the New Castle Circuit to attend the abolition convention held in Utica May last.[118]

Barris pleaded not guilty[119] and as the trial threatened to unduly prolong the Conference session, the investigation was suspended for the time being in view of a reconciliation of the parties.[120] The charges were eventually dropped but the following admonition was given to Barris,

> This Conference regrets the course pursued by Brother Barris with regard to the agitation of the subject of modern abolitionism, and that he be admonished by the presiding officer of its impropriety, and through the same medium respectfully requested to desist from such conduct in

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118 MTS (1838), 29.
119 MTS (1838), 29.
120 MTS (1838), 30.

the future; and that his character pass.[121]

At this session of the Conference Isaac Winan and Benjamin Preston were brought before the Conference for like activities and some time later all three of these men withdrew from the Conference and affiliated with the Congregational Consociation for which organization they labored in the states of Ohio and New York.[122]

Such proceedings on the part of the Conference were not without reverbration among the laity of the Church.

> The action of the Erie Conference against the prominent abolition brethern, and against the cause they were trying to promote, gave great offense to many of our people, as well as a large and influential part of our ministry, and for a time a very extensive secession from the Church was threatened. A few led the way, and were evidently greatly disappointed in not being followed by a much larger number. Our people aggrieved seemed loth to leave the Church in which they enjoyed so much that was good, because they could not approve of the action of a majority of the ministers of their own particular Conference, and it is certain that, while the feeling of discontent was widespread, and the few that did secede were active in producing disaffection wherever they could, yet but few secessions took place where some other local cause did not exist and become the chief irritant in producing the disruption.[123]

At the Conference session of 1839 the subject of slavery was brought to the front in the form of the New England Resolutions which when presented read:

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121 MTS (1838), 30.
122 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 504-505.
123 Gregg, HM, II, 96-97.

> That the New England Annual Conference recommend to the next General Conference to be helden in the city of Baltimore in May, 1840, to alter our General Rule on the subject of slavery, so that it shall read as follows, viz: The buying, or selling, or holding, men, women, or children as slaves under any circumstances, or giving them away unless for the purpose to free them.[124]

With reference to this proposal Gregg points out that,

> Slaveholders could and did interpret the old rule in the Discipline so that you must both "buy and sell:" that neither of these acts alone violated the rule. And then both "men, women, and children" must be embraced in the purchase; and furthermore, it must be done with the "intention to enslave them" interpreted the word "enslave" to mean, the making slaves of free persons. The Rule, therefore, was a perfect nullity in all the Southern States, except, perhaps, in extreme cases of the African slave trade.[125]

The Conference, by a vote of 83 to 6, declined to concur with the New England Resolutions.[126] Of this action Fradenburgh says,

> It would be interesting reading if we had the arguments by which the Erie Conference justified this extraordinary action, by which it practically declared itself in favor of slavery in every form in which it existed in the United States, and in favor of nullifying any previous General Conference legislation which stood in the way.[127]

The abolitionist element in the Conference, unwilling to allow such a stand to pass unchallenged, proffered the following resolutions which were tabled.

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124 MTS (1839), 40.
125 Gregg, HM, II, 102.
126 MTS (1839), 40.
127 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 506.

> That the resolution on abolition passed by the last Erie Annual Conference be rescinded from the minutes of the journal.[128]
>
> That the resolution of the last Conference on abolition is not intended to deprive a Methodist preacher of the privilege of uniting and acting in common with their fellow citizens in an anti-slavery society, the same as is allowed the preachers who wish to unite and act in the Colonization Society.[129]

As a result of the tabling of these resolutions Allured Plimpton asked for a location and it was granted.[130]

A temporary peace between the dissenting factions of the Conference was effected when both parties held caucuses for the purpose of nominating delegates to the General Conference of 1840.[131] The nominees of the anti-abolitionist party were elected and in this way the first abolition controversy in the Conference was settled.[132]

Such a condition could not last for long and the introduction of resolutions to the General Conference of 1844 on the subject of slavery which were proposed by the Genesee Conference served to reopen the issue. These resolutions which were defeated by a vote of 61 to 33 had as their object the refusal to admit or to continue any person in the Church who held a slave or slaves in any state, territory, or district,

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128 MTS (1839), 41.
129 MTS (1839), 41.
130 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 506.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid, 507.

where the laws of the state, territory, or district would admit the emancipation and permit the emancipated slave to enjoy freedom.[133]

The cause of abolition finally came to triumph at the Conference of 1846 after a protracted and heated debate upon the floor of the Conference.[134] The resultant resolutions drawn by the Conference in this year were to a large degree prompted by the many memorials on the subject of slavery which bore the names of many influential members of the church.[135] These resolutions reveal not only the stimulus for the action taken but also indicate the attitude of the Church relative to the split which divided its membership into its northern and southern branches as well as showing its position on the subject of slavery.

> Your committee to whom were referred the memorials on slavery reports as follows, viz: That these memorials are presented in very respectful language and signed by highly esteemed members of our church and your committee after due consideration on the subject are of the opinion that it is still as ever "a great moral evil" and that our discipline and standard works combine their undeviating testimony against it as opposed to the Christian religion--alike subversive of liberty of right and of virtue. And that such are and ever must be the nature of the relation of master to slave wherever they exist in all those states and territories and districts where the law admits emancipation and allows the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, that all our mem-

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133 MTS (1843), 94-95.
134 Gregg, HM, II, 280.
135 MTS (1846), 167.

bers should be required by the same rule which obliges our official members to free theirs, to do likewise; and that such rule should be inserted among the general rules of our discipline. Your committee also deprecates a line of demarcation, limiting the field of our itineracy as derogatory to the genius of Methodism, and a disregard of interest of the souls to whom we are to preach the word of God. And furthermore your committee are of the opinion that such are the indications of Providence and the aspect of affairs, both in and out of the Church, growing in part out of the doings of the General Conference, that by the adoption of prudent but decided measures we may finally and safely free ourselves from the embarrassments of this greatly agitated subject. And in conclusion your committee would respectfully present the following resolutions for adoption by this Conference, viz.:

That our general rule on slavery prohibits the buying or selling men, women, or children, with the intention of either originating or perpetuating their enslavement.

That the next General Conference to add the following rule immediately after our general rule on slavery: The holding of slaves in any state, territory, or district where the law will admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.

That although we ardently desire the extripation of slavery, nevertheless we have no sympathy for, nor fellowship with those who seek the division of the Church or dissolution of the Union.[136]

The settlement of the abolitionist controversy, however, did not bring to an end anti-slavery sentiment within the Church for slavery continued to disturb the peace of Methodism in this area. The passage of the "Fugitive Slave Law" brought the subject of slavery once again to the floor of the Confer-

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[136] MTS (1846), 167-168.

erence and the resultant resolutions reveal not only the attitude of the Church toward slavery but also toward the authority of the state. The Conference of 1857 saw the "Fugitive Slave Law" as being in direct opposition to the principles of the Christian faith. It urged submission of the membership of the Church to those in authority in the nation, yet it did not believe that Christians could obey such laws of man as required disobedience to the law of God and it further recommended that the people on every occasion "act as becometh the subjects of the kingdom which is not of this world, committing the cause of the slave into the hands of the righteous God who judgeth righteously.[137]

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 brought violent protest from the Conference of that year and the following resolution which was unanimously adopted by the body serves to indicate the intensity of the feeling in this matter.

> The recent act of Congress, which opens to slavery a vast territory heretofore regarded as saved to freedom by solemn and time-honored compact, meets our strongest disapprobation and dissent, and we claim the right as Christian Ministers, in view of the moral bearing of the subject, to enter against this act our earnest protest. We protest against it as an act providing for the extension and perpetuity of the system of American Slavery, a system which is only evil and that continually; as a measure which by providing a market and creating a

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137 MTS (1851), 277.

demand for slave labor, offers strong temptation to a revival of the slave trade, and otherwise encourages Slavery in its vilest and most revolting forms, when it would otherwise soon cease to exist. We protest against this act as a measure in our judgement dangerous to the union of these states, contrary to the principles of the Gospel, and exposed to the displeasure and judgements of God.[138]

As late as 1859[139] despite the fact that similar action had been taken in 1852,[140] 1853,[141] 1854,[142] 1857,[143] petitions were sent to the General Conference requesting drastic alteration of the disciplinary rules on slavery.

Many believed that the Slavery problem could be solved through the efforts of the Colonization Society and as early as 1839[144] there is evidence of cooperation with this Society and it would appear that its agents were commended to the membership of the Church and that they enjoined the cooperation of its pastors.[145]

The Methodists did not confine their feelings in the slavery issue to the passage of Conference resolutions. Financial assistance was rendered in certain instances. In 1855 a fund was raised by the Conference to be used in enlisting Methodists desirous of emancipating their slaves to remove

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138 MTS (1854), 369-370.
139 MEC, V, iv, 17.
140 MTS (1852), 314.
141 MTS (1853), 343.
142 MTS (1854), 369.
143 MEC, V, ii, 13.
144 MTS (1839), 41.
145 MTS (1855), 391.

them to a free state if necessary to obtain their freedom and also to be used for the purchase of slaves where family relations might be severed as the result of the residence of a portion of the family in a free state.[146] When a colored man appeared on the floor of the Conference of 1859 and appealed for funds to be utilized in the redemption of his son from bondage the conference responded generously.[147]

Methodist people were moved to take an active part in the matter of slavery and some played an important role in the conduct of the underground railway. There exists definite evidence that the Methodists in several localities in northwestern Pennsylvania were actively engaged in this venture. In Meadville they were among the agents of the railway.[148] Methodists were likewise actively engaged in the conduct of the enterprize in Brookville, Punxsutawney, Clarington, and Claysville.[149]

Certain Methodists were even to go farther than this in an effort to bring an end to American slavery and among those with John Brown at Harper's Ferry were Methodists from this region.[150]

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146 MTS (1855), 392.
147 MEC, V, iv, 6.
148 Blemaster, Arthur W., MUR, The Community of Meadville on the Underground Railway, Unpublished manuscript, Master's Thesis, Allegheny College, 1926.
149 McKnight, HNP, 319.
150 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 316.

The coming of the Civil War had a marked effect upon the Church. There was little affection displayed for the South and little effort was exerted by the Church in an attempt to understand their actions. In 1861 a committee was formed in the Conference to report upon the state of the country. The resolutions which were drawn up by this committee were adopted by a unanimous standing vote of the Conference and are as follows,

> That in its prompt and vigorous efforts to preserve the Union and suppress rebellion and treason, the government at Washington shall have our earnest sympathy and prayers, our hearty approval and cooperation.
>
> That we are opposed to all compromise with armed traitors, believing that unconditional submission to the Constitution and laws of our country is a duty which our government has both the right and power to enforce.
>
> That we confidently trust that the time has come when slavery shall no longer be the controlling power, either in our domestic or foreign relations, but that its influence in the affairs of the nation shall grow less and less, until it please God to remove the great evil altogether.
>
> That without intending any improper interference with the affairs of the army, we respectfully and earnestly recommend to all in command, to respect the obligations of the holy sabbath, and to carefully guard the morals of the soldiers against those evils which are but too common to a state of war.[151]

This committee continued to submit similar reports to the annual Conference throughout the duration of the war and at

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[151] MEC, VI, ii, 22-23.

the gathering in 1865 it presented the following resolutions which reflect the attitude of Methodism toward the defeat of the South, its feeling concerning the assassination of Lincoln, and the rights to be granted to the negro.

> We acknowledge, with profound gratitude, the hand of God in the complete subjugation of the Rebel armies, and in the signal disgrace which covers the so-called confederacy and its friends.
>
> We deplore the existance of wickedness so great, in this Christian country, as could, for political purposes, destroy the life of a good man, and deprive the Republic of one of its most worthy presidents.
>
> We have increased confidence in the stability of our Civil government and in the purposes of God for the good of our country; and as a conference, we will shrink no duty, or devotion to our country that may be demanded of us.
>
> That the colored man has, in the late war proved himself to be a man of brave and patriotic impulses, and that justice demands that he shall enjoy the elective franchise, without any qualifications or restraints which is not, in the light of the law equally applicable to the while man.[152]

Many Methodists were among those serving in the Northern army and Allegheny College put a company into the field.[153] A number of the Conference members served as chaplains,[154] while some served with the Christian Commission[155] and others were officers[156] and doctors.[157] Many of the preachers who

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152 MEC, VII, ii, 65.
153 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 749.
154 Ibid, 245, 279, 344, 355.
155 Ibid, 266.
156 Ibid, 454.
157 Ibid, 476.

remained at home made war speeches and recruited for the army.[158] The numbers going to the army from some of the churches was great enough to impair the work of the church and Sunday Schools.[159] In a few localities this factor became more acute due to the fact that the remaining members were, in some instances, in favor of the South and thus a wide breach resulted which served to estrange the parishoners from their pastors.[160] The most representative comment which is recorded about the effect of the war is found in the Presiding Elder's Reports of 1865. Of the effect of the war on the New Castle District it is written,

> Notwithstanding the influence of the war, which was in some respects deleterious, the cause of God has constantly advanced within the territory included within the district. Our finances will show improvement, while our contributions for benevolent objects are greatly in advance of past years.[161]

It is to be noted that as early as 1865 monies were sent from the Conference to assist in Reconstruction Activities.[162]

Feeling as intensely as they did upon national issues, the Methodist preachers of the day could scarcely escape the charge of meddling in politics. While the Conference disapproved of the itinerants becoming partisians in political

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158 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 530.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 MEC, VII, ii, 32.
162 MEC, VII, ii, 6.

strife it was ready to "resist all efforts to exclude the subject of public morality from the Christian pulpit.[163] While the preachers seemingly made no formal entrance into the field of politics there is little doubt that their words and actions were clearly lent to political issues and in many instances the people regarded them as political partisans. At one place the feeling in this matter ran so high that the life of the preacher was threatened should he venture to the polls of Union City. The preacher, however, was undaunted although not unscared for he proceeded to the poll to cast his vote for Lincoln surrounded by a cordon of twenty-four Union men with drawn revolvers.[164]

The development of the natural resources of the area which commenced during this period had a marked influence upon the Church. Lumbering became a major industry and speaking of its relation to religion an old settler remarks of the Methodists in this way.

> They would generally get converted in the fall or winter, and in the spring when they ran their lumber down the river their religion would go down with them, but did not seem to return promptly.[165]

About 1844 the iron industry commenced to develop. This was chiefly confined to Clarion county but there it was the

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163 MEC, V, iv, 13.
164 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 263.
165 Ibid, 400.

cause of Methodist activity.

> In 1850 there were thirty-two blast furnaces for the manufacture of pig iron, and at nearly all of these Methodist preachers held services. At Jefferson Furnace a small church building was erected, but when the furnace was abandoned, the church ceased to be of use. . . .The class at Jefferson Furnace was incorporated with that at Mount Joy.[166]

Oil, however, was the great factor in the development of this region and with Drake and Smith's discovery thousands were attracted to this section of the State. While Methodism was busy establishing new classes in the "oil regions" many of its time honored members were lost due to the fact that many of them sold their farms for "oil lands" and removed to other parts.[167] Nevertheless, the best preachers of the Conference were assigned to this area for it could well benefit from Christianity.[168] The following account is perhaps typical of the activity which characterized the life of an itinerant in these regions whose settlements passed even the wildest of the West and whose capital, Pithole, with its two smaller suburbs of Babylon and Red Hot boasted over three hundred saloons, a hundred brothels, and a murder a day for a year and one half. The work of Darius S. Steadman in this field will be told wherever the story of Pennsylvania Methodism is related.

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166 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 770-771.
167 MEC, VII, ii, 36.
168 Ibid.

Darius S. Steadman was appointed to Pithole in 1865. This was at that time a city of from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants, and was in the very center of oil excitement in the oil regions. Some great flowing wells had been struck, there was a great rush of people to this new field. The great army had just been disbanded and much money of the discharged officers and soldiers came to Pithole. Money was plenty and the depraved of both sexes were attracted to the place. Mr. Steadman gives an account of the first meeting. "I arrived on the grounds Sunday afternoon, like Nehemiah of old, walked around alone to see what was going on. I found that generally business of every kind was in full blast. There were a great many idlers, who were not keeping the Sabbath, but pursuing their usual avocations. I came to one place where work was stopped on a large building in process of construction. A good-looking man was sitting on a stump reading. I introduced myself and told him my business. I showed him the list of Conference appointments and my ordination parchments; he called his men up and introduced them; they gave me a hearty welcome. I then called for singers; they were here in this gang of workmen. Boards were soon arranged for seats sufficient to accommodate three hundred persons, and a dry goods box for pulpit. So we were ready for the first religious service in Pithole. At a signal the impromptu choir sang, and sang with a will. Some possessed rich, trained voices, and their hearts were interested. Immediately the congregation began to assemble, the seats were all filled and the people still came from every direction, until a large multitude had come together. I was then introduced and received three cheers. I was vouched for by the boss and preached to a very interesting and apparently interested congregation. At the close of the service the boss arose and said that he would be very sorry to have anything occur that might detract from the interest of the first service. The preacher who had addressed them had come as their pastor, and a collection would be taken for his benefit. They passed their hats and received about seventy-five dollars.

That night I stayed at a hotel; could not sleep; too much noise; paid five dollars. The next day I went around to get acquainted; everybody seemed to know

me, and I was no longer a stranger. A carpenter showed me his bed room--a pile of nice dry shavings in a corner of his shop, and some blankets. I soon made arrangements for another corner of the shop, where I piled up shavings and spread my blanket. Thereafter, as long as I needed it, this was my bed room, and here I enjoyed solid comfort.

Mr. Steadman retained his military cast of mind, as is evidenced by the following anecdotes which have been fully authenticated. When he was appointed to Pithole there was neither church nor school. There were no school funds, no place where a school could be conducted, and no sentiment favorable to education. Money was God, and oil was everything. In vain did this preacher of righteousness appeal to patriotism, religion, justice or sentiment. But the iron will of one man was to win a victory over the cupidity of the whole population. One afternoon Mr. Steadman, note book in hand, took a little walk through the town. The next day he made a visit to Franklin, the county seat, and made information against more than sixty men for selling liquor without a license. These were all cited to appear at the next term of court, and there each pleaded guilty and paid his fine. With the money thus obtained this fighty parson returned to Pithole and tried to start a school. But now the objection was raised that there was no building suitable for the purpose of conducting a school. Then the true disinterestedness of the man and his family showed itself. The house which was used for a parsonage was large and roomy--one of the best in the place. Mrs. Steadman, with the family, moved to Forestville, N. Y., leaving Mr. Steadman to start school in the house thus vacated. When the funds so obtained were exhausted, Mr. Steadman made another tour of observation and another trip to Franklin with the same result, and in this way the "little red school house" was sustained for a full year.

It was about this time that Ben Hogan, at one time aspirant for the honor of being the world's champion prizefighter, was in the height of his fame and glory. His hotel was the biggest and the worst in Pithole. By means of a cunningly devised advertisement in one of the Buffalo papers, he had enticed a young girl from her home in central New York with the

hope of securing a permanent position in a private family. Since her arrival in Pithole she had been held in actual slavery, locked in a room on the upper floor of the house, denied food except in very limited quantities, and threatened with death by starvation unless she would yield herself for the unholy purpose for which she was brought. But the girl was true and chose death. Some way she managed to get a note of writing paper and placed in an envelope directed to her mother. It was a slender chance, for the probability was that the envelope, found with no stamp, near the hotel, would be brought to the proprietor. But Providence must have guided the wind that blew that day, for in some way the letter reached its destination. Immediately upon the receipt of the letter, the mother, distracted with grief and fear, hastened to Pithole, but was rudely repulsed by Hogan. Entreaties, tears, prayers--all were of no avail. She was not permitted to see her daughter, send word to her, or even know her condition. At length she called upon the Methodist minister, and falling at his feet with her arms about his knees, sobbed out her story. She was comforted as best the gentle heart of the minister and his wife could do, and left with the latter while Mr. Steadman went down town and found three friends. Together the four went to the hotel. Each was an ex-army officer, and each had a brace of army pistols in his pockets. The proprietor was inclined to treat them as he had done the mother, but a glance into the barrels of eight loaded revolvers, held within less than a foot of his face, and especially the glint of the eyes of the leader, which were more cold than steel, caused him to think differently. The four followed the proprietor upstairs to the room where the girl was held a prisoner, and then the march to the parsonage began. Mr. Steadman was compelled to support the almost fainting girl, as he, with her on his arm, led the procession followed by his three friends. The little company attracted no little attention as it passed through the streets of the town, and two persons have asserted to the writer that the scene when mother and daughter met was the most affecting they had ever witnessed. Hogan afterwards professed conversion and entered the evangelistic field.[169]

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[169] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 357-60.

F. The Clergy of the Period.

The leadership which Methodism attracted in these years was to a large degree responsible for its success and a consideration of the evangels of Methodism merits our attention. The theological backgrounds of these itinerants was as varied as their nationality which represented all the protestant lands of Europe. Not only did these preachers spring from Methodist homes but from families who were professed Presbyterians,[170] Quakers,[171] Baptists,[172] Lutherans,[173] and Universalists.[174] Many of these were drawn into the work as a result of camp meetings and revivals. Most of them were self-educated, but there were courses of study outlined for them by the Conference of 1836.[175] An increasing number of college graduates became affiliated with the Conference toward the close of the era.[176] The earliest evidence of advanced theological training appears in 1849 when M. C. Briggs was granted a location that he might attend the Biblical Institute at Concord, New Hampshire.[177]

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170 Gregg, HM, II, 57, 182, 365; Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 63, 108, 226, 263, 297, 365, 434.
171 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 302, 313.
172 Gregg, HM, II, 111.
173 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 414.
174 Ibid, 317.
175 MTS (1836), 10.
176 Gregg, HM, II, 376, 399; Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 319, 340, 363, 378, 416, 419, 422, 429, 443.
177 MTS (1849), 229.

The majority of these itinerants were of poor, hard-working stock but doctors,[178] lawyers,[179] authors,[180] and inventors[181] found their way into the roving ranks of Methodism.

Their preaching knew no formal bounds and they were equally at home in bar room,[182] kitchen,[183] barns,[184] dance halls[185] and pulpit. The sermons were often well ordered and carefully delivered[186] and some of the itinerants were popular, unassuming and non-combative,[187] but many incidents are recorded at revivals where marked physical effects attended their fervent discourses. The following description, written about 1860, is indicative of the scenes which attended many revivals.

> In some instances both men and women would fall down, their muscles become rigid, and they would remain motionless, some but a few minutes, others from one to three hours, and one was carried home and remained in this condition all night--but they all appeared happy when they recovered.[188]

The preachers of these days were also noted for a fond-

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178 Gregg, HM, II, 13, 66, 103, 349.
179 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 356.
180 Ibid, 223.
181 Ibid, 476.
182 Ibid, 405.
183 Ibid, 253.
184 Ibid, 31, 60, 273.
185 Ibid, 52.
186 Ibid, 165.
187 Ibid, 165.
188 Ibid, 379.

ness of theological debate and the clergy of the Unitarian,[189] Presbyterian,[190] Universalist,[191] and Baptist[192] denominations afforded many opportunities and challenges for such activity. Differences were not always brought to formal debate but frequently found expression in series of sermons and in written pamphlets written by the contestants.[193] Some of the Methodist pamphlets found ready distribution in the mountains and won many adherents to Methodism.[194]

Living and working conditions were hard for these men. A description of the Luthersburg circuit in 1845 is typical of the conditions under which the Methodist ministers of this period labored. The pastor then in charge writes,

> We were in the saddle almost every day, frequently riding twenty and sometimes forty miles per day; often in the dense woods, following cow paths and deer paths or marked trees for a guide, sometimes seeing a herd of deer coming as near as the range of pistol shot. We often slept in the log cabin, in the loft where we could count the stars through the logs, and in the morning step out of bed into the snow, sometimes when the thermometer was thirty degrees below zero.[195]

As late as 1850 some of the circuits were as much as one

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189 Gregg, HM, II, 68.
190 Ibid, 68, 325-27.
191 Ibid, 240.
192 Ibid, 240.
193 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 327.
194 Ibid, 325-27.
195 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 161 from "Pittsburgh Christian Advocate", July 1, 1886.

hundred twenty-five miles around.[196] Another itinerant describing his circuit says,

> I scaled the cliffs, crossed the mountains, waded the streams, traversed the forests without even a marked tree to guide my course. My outfit consisted of my Bible and hymn-book, a hatchet, a strong jack-knife, a few provisions, some matches, a hook and line and compass. I could cook my bacon, or a trout from some mountain stream, spitted on a forked stick, and eat it with my bread on the sap-side of a piece of birch bark with an unalloyed relish. If night overtook me, I had only to make a fire and to lie down to sleep soundly on a bed of basam, spruce, or hemlock branches, after making the forest echo with prayer and song.[197]

Conditions slowly improved and by 1849 steps were under-way to secure parsonages and the heavy furnishings for them.[198] There are records of salaries ranging from $97 to $1,875[199] and conations of goods.[200] However, it appears that salaries were on the increase for one district in 1865 reports that: "The salaries, ranging from twenty-five to one hundred per cent in advance of the preceeding year, were all paid, excepting in one or two instances.[201]

It is to be noted with respect to working conditions that the ministers as early as 1838 were requested to use their efforts to raise money on every circuit and station for the

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196 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 433.
197 Ibid, 315.
198 MYS (1849), 232.
199 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 439.
200 Ibid, 400.
201 MEC, VII, ii, 36.

relief of the most necessitous superannuated and supernumerary ministers, widows, and orphans.[202] Another forward step was taken in this direction in 1860 when the Constitution of the Preacher's Aid Society was adopted.[203] The purpose of this society was,

> To secure a fund for the benefit of our wives and children, in case of death of any one of us, we the undersigned do pledge ourselves to pay the sum of ten dollars each to the widow, or children of the assignee of any one who has signed this paper should he die during the year.[204]

There is observable a definite tendency on the part of many of the itinerants of this period to transfer to the newly formed Western Conferences and the cases of such transfer are too numerous to be here mentioned.

A few of the itinerants transferred to other denominations. Already mention has been made of the losses to the Congregational Consociation. Others, however, found the Protestant Episcopal,[205] Methodist Protestant,[206] and Methodist Episcopal, South,[207] more to their liking and became affiliated with them.

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202 MTS (1838), 32.
203 MEC, VI, i, 21.
204 MEC, VI, iv, 16.
205 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 386; II, 143; Gregg, HM, II, 294.
206 Gregg, HM, II, 422.
207 Fradenburgh, HEC, I, 838.

G. The Status of Methodism at the End of the Period.

The year 1865 marks the first appearance of the reports of the District Superintendents and the following portions of these reports are included to provide a concept of the condition and status of Methodism in the territory at the close of the period.

> New Castle District extends from the Allegheny river along the south line of the conference about sixty miles, reaching to the State of Ohio just far enough to embrace one tier of townships. . . . The territory embraced constitutes part of Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Armstrong counties. . . .
>
> This country was originally settled by men of the Calvinistic order, and although Methodism has made great inroads upon the faith of the fathers, the Presbyterian churches are in many places yet in the ascendant. . . .
>
> The district contains fifteen charges, six of which are stations, three or four others having preaching every Sabbath morning, the balance are circuits, two of which employ two preachers each, affording regular service at the several appointments once in two weeks. Several year's experience, accompanied with close observation, has convinced me that the interest of our work demands such an arrangement as will employ but one person to a charge, with territory sufficient to support him, and just enough work to supply his time.[208]

The superintendent of the Jamestown district makes these, among other comments,

> The Jamestown District embraced the past year twenty-one appointments, filled by twenty-five ministers, including the presiding elder. . . .Eight are in

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208 MEC, VII, ii, 32.

Warren county, Pa.; one, Columbus and Corry, lies in Warren and Erie counties; four in Crawford, and one each in Venango and Elk counties.

Benevolent enterprises have been well attended too. The missionary cause will receive about one dollar per member, and other regular collections will not fall behind, but in many instances be in advance of former years. . . .

The religious condition of the district is, all things considered, very encouraging. Some good revivals have occurred, and much good seed has been sown all over the work, which will most certainly be reaped, although it may be by other hands than those who sowed.[209]

Of the Clarion District it is reported that,

The Clarion District lies wholly east of the Allegheny river, embracing Clarion and Jefferson counties, with portions of Venango, Forest, Elk, Clearfield, and Armstrong. . . .

With regard to the people, they are intelligent and solid, frank and genial. They are proverbial for their generous hospitality.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is a power in this locality, and is accomplishing well her part in the great work of moulding the religious character of the country.[210]

Of the fourth district in northwestern Pennsylvania it is said that,

The Meadville District occupies a central position in the Erie Conference. It lies wholly in western Pennsylvania, embraced mainly in Crawford, Venango, and Mercer counties, and taking in a fair proportion of the famous oil regions. . . .

The district has nineteen circuits and stations,

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209 MEC, VII, ii, 36.
210 MEC, VII, ii, 38-39.

employs twenty effective preachers, has forty-eight churches and seventeen parsonages.[211]

Such are the conditions which exist within the respective districts of the Erie Annual Conference within the bounds of northwestern Pennsylvania. With these observations consideration is completed of the events connected with the growth, expansion, and development of Methodism in northwestern Pennsylvania during the years between the formation of the Erie Conference and the close of the Civil War and without further delay the events which occurred between the end of the present period and the beginning of the twentieth century must be considered.

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211 MEC, VII, ii, 40.

CHAPTER V

1866--1900 FROM THE CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR TO THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY OF METHODISM IN NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The current division has as its purpose the survey of those events and activities unique to Methodism which mark the intervening years between the close of the Civil War and the completion of the first century of Methodist activities in northwestern Pennsylvania. Insofar as the first Methodist itinerant had been assigned to this region in the year 1800 by the old Baltimore Conference the present chapter closes with the dawn of the twentieth century. In this division are recorded those events which were associated with the growth and expansion of Methodist influence and action. Likewise, the life of the Church is observed as it is evidenced by the activities and attitudes of the Church and Conference. Then, too, the conditions of secular life are viewed together with their conditioning influence upon the Methodism of these years, and, finally, Methodist leadership is considered.

A. The Growth and Expansion of the Church.

With the close of the Civil conflict between the states and the return of peace, Methodism in this territory could

settle itself to its primary task--the spreading of the Gospel among men and the forging of an organization in which such men might serve God and help man--and to this task it set itself. Such success as marked these activities is clearly discernable in the increase of church membership. At the end of the preceeding period 13,800 persons were to be found upon the membership records of the Methodist church. By 1900 Methodism had so increased that 37,100 called themselves Methodists. This is indicative of an increase of more than 170% over the beginning of the period and the average gain in membership was one thousand per year.

The extent of the expansion of Methodism in this region during the period is also shown by the number of churches in existance at the beginning and end of the era. There were but 196 churches at the outset of this period, yet there were 308 at its conclusion.[1] Hence an average of slightly more than four new churches per annum were built during these years.

While it is evident that many new classes and societies were established, not a few new circuits formed, and numerous churches built the details of such activities are not herein recorded insofar as their demands upon space is prohibitive and also since the records in these matters are so lacking in

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1 Minutes of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume XVI, Number 1: Jamestown, New York, Journal Printing Co., 1900, page 135 ff.

detail that it is impossible to present an accurate or complete record of such items.

The revival and the camp meeting, as in the preceeding period, continued to be the devices of church expansion and as such constituted one of the major activities of the church. During these years the revival spirit appears to have been quite generally prevalent both as to time and location. These meetings were generally quite well attended and the most extensive of which there is record occurred at Cherry Run in 1884 when ten thousand persons were in attendance.[2] The first camp meeting held on the Strattonville camp ground attracted over seven thousand to its Sunday service at which "the order was excellent, the preaching evangelistic, and the converts many."[3]

The effectiveness of the camp meeting and the revival as a means of gaining adherents to the faith may be judged from the fact that on one district--the Clarion--in the ten years between 1886 and 1896 over ten thousand converts are recorded and of this number a high percentage affiliated with the Church. Other Pennsylvania districts frequently reported as many as one thousand converts per year and the numbers upward of five hundred are not uncommon. Reports from individual Churches indicate that at times conversions numbering as many

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[2] Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 769.
[3] Ibid, 770.

as three hundred occurred during a church year.[4]

These gatherings often had a marked effect upon both church and community and the following account of the great Greenville revival serves to reveal this.

> The feeling now became intense. Men trembled in their seats and wept like children, and those who had been given up for lost, came forward, bowed at the altar, confessed their sins and went away rejoicing in the Savior's love. An effort was made to close the meetings but without success. They continued with unabated interest. Heavy draws were made on the community by various kinds of shows, but their proprietors locked out upon small audiences and paid their hotel bills as best they could. Drinking saloons and billiard tables went begging for customers, and the universal remark was, "What a change!" Up to last Sabbath evening two hundred and eighteen persons had united with the church, with quite a number who will yet unite at the earliest opportunity.[5]

The use made of the revival and camp meeting may be gathered from a statement appearing in the report of one of the presiding elders in 1887 which said in effect that camp meetings were conducted in the summer and revivals in fall, winter, and spring.[6]

B. Change and Proposed Change in Conference Jurisdiction.

The General Conference of 1876 acted to limit the jurisdiction of the Erie Annual Conference to that portion of its

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4 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 584.
5 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 632, from "Pittsburgh Christian Advocate", April 9, 1870.
6 HEC, XII, iv, 32.

former territory which lay within the states of Pennsylvania and New York.[7] The boundaries then assigned have remained unchanged to the present day and the portion of Pennsylvania thus occupied has been designated in the first chapter of this thesis.[8]

A proposal to affect a change in the jurisdiction of the Erie Annual Conference appeared in 1881 when a committee was appointed by the Conference to consider the subject of a consolidation of the Pittsburg and Erie Annual Conferences.[9] The proposal met with defeat in the following year when the Pittsburg Conference refused to act upon the proposals of such Committee which conferred with a like Committee of the Pittsburg Conference.[10]

C. Attitudes and Activities of Church and Conference.

During the period the Conference found opportunities at various times to express itself concerning matters touching upon church polity, religious practices, and secular conditions. The former manifested itself in the form of the lay representation issue which first appeared in 1868 when the Conference sanctioned the General Conference action in this

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7 MEC, X, ii, 3.
8 See page
9 MEC, XI, ii, 1.
10 MEC, XI, iii, 11-12.

matter, pledged itself to explain such action to its constitutent congregations, and to secure an impartial vote in the matter during the summer of the following year.[11] However, little progress was made in the matter and the Conference was glad for a settlement in 1871.[12] Yet we again find evidence of the attitude of the Erie Conference in this matter in 1875 when the following resolution was passed,

> That in case the next General Conference should provide for the election of Presiding Elders, it is our judgment that provisions should also be made for lay delegation in the Annual Conference.[13]

The first lay electoral Conference recorded was held in New Castle, Pennsylvania, in 1883, at which a delegate to the General Conference was elected.[14] A further evidence of this tendency is found in a resolution passed in 1890 which provided,

> That when, if ever, the lay delegate in the General Conference shall equall the ministerial delegation, the body shall deliberate and vote as one body, and never as two.[15]

Methodism continued its educational activities throughout the entirety of this period. In the realm of religious education the Sunday School Movement made constant advance. There there had been 235 Sunday Schools with 15,400 enrollees

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11 MEC, VIII, i, 37.
12 MEC, VIII, iv, 33.
13 MEC, IX, iv, 7.
14 MEC, XI, iv, 20.
15 MEC, XIII, iii, 13.

at the beginning of the era there were at the end 391 Schools with 39,000 officers, teachers, and scholars.[16] It is to be noted that the percentage increase of enrollees is 160%.

Not only did the Sunday School Movement increase in numbers but also there appear a number of factors indicative of an improvement in its pedagogical techniques. As early as 1867 Sunday School Institutes were planned as a

> tendency to improvement in the method of management and instruction and as bringing the Sunday School teachers to a high standard of qualification for his work.[17]

The first of these institutes was held in the mid summer of the following year at Meadville and boasted an attendance of over one hundred ministers and many laymen.[18] In 1873 the Conference recommended the establishment of Teachers Training Classes in the local churches as a means of supplementing the work of the institutes[19] and the next year urged the universal adoption of the Uniform Lesson System.[20] At this same session the Conference lent its sanction to the assembly at Chautauqua Lake in New York State as a power for the good in the Sunday School cause.[21]

It is to be noted that a similar educational enterprise

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16 MEC, XVI, i, 133 ff.
17 MEC, VII, iv, 32.
18 MEC, VIII, i, 33.
19 MEC, IX, ii, 39.
20 MEC, IX, iii, 33.
21 MEC, IX, iii, 33.

was attempted in this section of Pennsylvania under the name of the Clarion District. This occurred sometime prior to 1890 for the "Minutes" of that year contains the following comment:

> The Clarion District Assembly, which has been held near Strattonville, in Clarion County, for several successive seasons, has demonstrated its right to live, grow, and thrive by the possession of a fine property, with a magnificent amphitheatre for a public lecture, concerts, and other conveniences for first class assembly; . . . Classes have been organized and successfully conducted for the study of the Chautauqua Lake Study Club courses, and methods for moral work, together with children's classes and itinerant's club, all these being so planned and controlled as to be specially adapted to meet the wants of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[22]

For some time following the sale of the physical properties of Carrier Seminary in 1886[23] its activities were continued as a summer enterprize in conjunction with the activities of the assembly.[24] However, the assembly enjoyed but a short span of life and has long since disappeared completely.

Despite such advances as were made in the field of religious education the Sunday Schools in many places continued to be primarily a summer undertaking with but few of the schools going into "winter quarters."[25]

Methodism also continued to tend to its undertakings in the field of secular education. Allegheny College continued

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22 MEC, XIII, iii, 23.
23 Beiler, ECE, 5.
24 MEC, XII, i, 96.
25 MEC, XIV, i, 64.

to claim the attentions of the Church and at the close of the century was the only educational institution in this entire territory which retained its direct connection with the Church. Throughout the period the College experienced a constant growth and its enrollment in the last year of the century was the largest until that time and numbered in excess of 500.[26] Despite the fact that frequent reference is made throughout the period by the Conference to the prosperity of the institution the year 1896 found it facing a financial crisis[27] but before the close of the century plans were under way to increase the endowment of the college.[28]

Other events, however, are more demonstrative of the improvement of the institution. While the Conference had recommended the admission of women to Allegheny in the closing years of the preceeding period, co-education at the college did not become a fact until the late '60's[29] but by 1873 twenty young women were to be found in its classrooms and co-education at Allegheny "was past the experimental stage."[30] The closing year of the Nineteenth Century found the facilities for the care of women students taxed to capacity.[31]

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26 MEC, XV, iv, 79.
27 MEC, XV, i, 17.
28 MEC, XV, ii, 83.
29 MEC, VIII, i, 31.
30 MEC, X, ii, 23.
31 MEC, XV, iv, 79.

New Departments were established from time to time and a Law School was added in 1871,[32] a military department appeared in 1887,[33] a department of Biology was established in 1896,[34] while a College of Business and a Conservatory of Music are mentioned at this time. However, it is to be noted that the Bible Department was discontinued as such in 1883.[35] Beiler believes that this was caused by a lack of interest on the part of the general student body which resulted from the conduct of the department upon a vocational basis which was unsuited to meet the needs of the average student.[36] However, such action seems to have had little effect upon the religious condition of the student body for five years later, in 1885, there were forty candidates for the ministry in its student body.[37] Nevertheless, it is to be observed that in the closing year of this period a Bible Course was made a requirement of every student.[38]

During these years two Seminaries were connected with the Conference. In 1867 Lake Shore Seminary at North East, Pennsylvania, was authorized.[39] It was under the supervisory care

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32 MEC, VIII, iv, 30.
33 MEC, XII, iv, 61.
34 MEC, XV, i, 77.
35 Beiler, ECE, 5.
36 Ibid.
37 MEC, XIII, i, 35.
38 MEC, XV, iv, 10.
39 Beiler, ECE, 5.

of the Conference although it was held by a private company.[40] It opened its doors in 1871[41] and was cleared of debt by 1874.[42] In 1876 it was valued at $40,000.[43] It disappeared from the Conference Minutes in 1877. It seems to have been an institution of some consequence for it had an enrollment of 150 students in 1872.[44] To-day, however, it has been enlarged and is known as Saint Mary's College and is conducted as a school for Roman Catholic priests of a Redemptorist Order.[45]

The plans which had been laid prior to the Civil War for Clarion Male and Female Seminary came to fruition in 1867 when the school was first opened under the name of Carrier Seminary.[46] It had a hundred students in 1877,[47] but by the following year its enrollment had dropped to 21 and it had accumulated impressive interesting bearing debts as a result of the depression in the oil industry.[48] However, it was reported as prospering in the next year[49] but by 1880 a financial crisis was reached[50] and a decline set in which culminated in the transfer of its property to a State Normal School in 1886.[51]

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40 Beiler, ECE, 5.
41 Ibid.
42 MEC, IX, iii, 39.
43 MEC, X, i, 24.
44 Beiler, ECE, 5.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 MEC, X, ii, 24.
48 MEC, X, ii, 28.
49 MEC, X, iii, 17.
50 MEC, XI, i, 19.
51 Beiler, ECE, 5.

A fleeting mention is made in 1882 of Waterford Academy[52] but the nature of its relation to the Conference is obscure as the singularity of its mention.

The relation of all these schools, save Allegheny, to the Conference vanishes during these years. Accounting for this phenomenon Beiler believes that the "spirit that set up a four year High School in every village sank these schools almost without a trace."[53]

As the Erie Conference had in the previous period been interested in the freeing of the Negro, so in these years it was interested in his welfare and education. Scarcely had the Civil War ended when a Conference Freedman's Aid and Southern Education Society was formed. Throughout the entirety of this period this organization was active and collections were taken annually for the advancement of its work.[54]

The Conference gave its support to those Constitutional amendments designed to invest men of color with the full rights of citizenship and saw them as "the necessary means to the permanent reconstruction of the nation on the basis of justice."[55]

Hospital work first claimed the attention of the Church

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52 MEC, XI, iii, 27.
53 Beiler, ECE, 5.
54 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 539-541.
55 MEC, VII, iii, 36.

of this area in 1894 when it undertook the upkeep of a bed in the Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.[56]

Interest in missions was much manifest in these years and new organizations were formed to care for this phase of the work of Methodism. The Women's Foreign Missionary Society is first mentioned in 1870 when the Conference heartily approved of its objects and welcomed it as an adjunct of great power and utility to the General Missionary Society of the Church.[57] Ten years later, in 1880, the Erie Conference Women's Home Missionary Society was formed at Corry, Pa.[58] To this society belongs the distinction of being the first Conference Home Missionary Society to be formed in American Methodism.[59] The first auxiliary of this organization was formed at Reno, Pa., during the summer of 1880.[60] The larger Conference Society came to be organized into District Missionary Societies in the years subsequent to 1888.[61]

The extent of the organization of these societies is observable from a report made five years previous to the close of the period. The following is the analysis of the Missionary report of the Conference of 1894.

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56 MEC, XIV, iii, 41.
57 MEC, VIII, iii, 19
58 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 764.
59 Ibid, 765.
60 Ibid, 765.
61 MEC, XIII, i, 23.

> Only 34 per cent of the Charges on the Clarion District have Foreign and 29 per cent Home Societies organized. Erie District has 31 per cent Foreign and 52 per cent Home Societies; Franklin District, 41 per cent Foreign and 42 per cent Home; Jamestown District, 51 per cent Foreign and 21 per cent Home; Meadville District, 58 per cent Foreign and 32 per cent Home; New Castle District, 73 per cent Foreign and 27 per cent Home. This shows that there are 51 per cent of the Charges that have no auxiliaries of the Woman's Foreign and 66 per cent of the Woman's Home Missionary Society.[62]

The interest which the Methodism of this day and region manifested in missions was not confined solely to the important matter of the organization and conduct of missionary societies. Both men and women representing the Methodism of northwestern Pennsylvania prepared themselves for service upon the mission field. As early as 1872, Louise E. Blackmar of West Springfield, Pa., had gone to Raipur, India.[63] In 1874, Miss Sagourney Trask of Youngsville, Pa., went to China as a medical missionary.[64] Sometime previous to 1878 Mrs. Flora Best Harris had been sent out by the Ladies Foreign Missionary Society of Meadville to work in Japan.[65] Dr. Rachel R. Benn left her home in Troy Center, Pa., in 1890 to labor in Tien Tsen, China.[66] Beroda, India, in 1890 became the field of service for Dr. Emma D. Hodge of Greenville, Pa., and five

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62 MEC, XIV, iv, 118.
63 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 762.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.

years later Miss Mary E. Williams of Oil City, Pa., found her way there.[67]

Men also found their way on to the mission field. William Boser, who, in 1879 was admitted to the Conference on trial and given deacon's orders under the missionary rule, went to India in the same year.[68] Samuel Long left the Conference for the same field in 1881.[69] J. H. Keely, who from 1881 to 1887 was a member of the Erie Annual Conference, found his way to a Methodist mission in Rosario, South America, some years after his affiliation with the Conference had ceased.[70]

At home, within the bounds of the territory, the Bethel Institution at Erie, working among the sailors of the lake, commanded the commendation, sympathy, and liberality of the preachers and people within the vicinity of Erie.[71]

When it is realized that one district in the Conference--the Clarion--in one year, 1887, increased its mission contributions by $700[72] and then two years later further increased it by $100 until a total of $4,000 was given annually to this activity[73] the interest which missions commanded is readily

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67 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 762.
68 MEC, X, iv, 11.
69 MEC, XII, i, 22.
70 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 722.
71 MEC, IX, iv, 36.
72 MEC, XII, iv, 29.
73 MEC, XIII, ii, 29.

acknowledged. It is to be further remembered that during the depressions which occurred in these years mission collections suffered but slightly.

The work of Church Extension, in the first year of this period, was adjudged worthy of the support of the Methodism of this region.[74] Collections for this purpose were taken in all the Methodist congregations of the area throughout the entirety of the period. While about one thousand dollars a year was collected for this work during these years it is to be remembered that thirty churches within the Conference, many of which were in Pennsylvania, received financial assistance from this society.[75]

The religious publications which attracted the attention of the Methodism of these years is worthy of notice. Among the publications which are recommended to the people are found "The Epworthy Herald," "The Methodist Review," "The Missionary Review," "The Gospel in All Lands," "World Wide Missions," and "The Pittsburgh Christian Advocate."[76] During the period subscription campaigns for all of these publications were sponsored by the Church at one time or another.

As in the preceeding period active support was given to the Bible Cause and the end of the period found evidence of

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[74] MEC, VII, iii, 29.
[75] MEC, XV, iv, 91.
[76] MEC, XIII, iv, 72.

a reawakened interest in Bible study.[77] While there is no way of determining the amounts accruing to this enterprize from the Pennsylvania portions of the Conference for the entire period it is to be noted that in 1872 this portion of the Conference provided over one thousand dollars for the promotion of this work.[78]

The Tract Cause for some years continued to attract the attention of the Methodism of the area but subsequent to 1888 it disappears from its usual place in the "Minutes."

Two new church organizations came into being during the years of this period. The Constitution of the Ladies and Pastors Christian Union was adopted by the Conference of 1873[79] and branches of this organization were formed in the several charges of the Conference during the subsequent years.

The Epworth League is first mentioned in 1889 when the Conference made the following recommendations for the organization of a young people's society.[80]

1. The organization of the Epworth League on all charges.

2. The organization of a District Epworth League.

3. The organization of a Conference Epworth League.

The first Leagues came into being in 1890[81] and by 1895

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77 MEC, XIII, iii, 43.
78 MEC, IX, i, 63.
79 MEC, IX, ii, 36.
80 MEC, XIII, ii, 42.
81 MEC, XIII, iii, 41.

Leagues were to be found throughout the Conference.[82] By 1896 15,000 young men and women were affiliated with this organization.[83]

The years of this period found the Methodism of this region relentless in its temperance endeavors. The dawn of the era found the attitude of Methodism toward the liquor evil clearly expressed. Among the temperance resolutions adopted by the Conference in 1866 are the following,

> That all our ministers are instructed to give active and efficient cooperation to all Temperance movements, for the enforcement of laws as they now are, and for the enactment of future ones.
>
> It is the duty of every minister to make a vigorous effort by sermons and other means, to awaken the people to a sense of this great evil, and raise the tone of public sentiment upon the subject.
>
> The purity of the Church and her influence in society imperatively demands of us the rigid enforcement of the rule of our own discipline against the use of intoxicating liquors except in cases of extreme necessity.[84]

The Conference of 1867 made its position in the matter more explicit when it viewed the use of ale, hard cider, and domestic wine as violations of the discipline.[85]

The Temperance program for the Church in this period

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82 MEC, XIV, iv, 64.
83 MEC, XV, i, 84.
84 MEC, VII, iii, 36.
85 MEC, VII, iv, 84.

appears to have followed the outline for such a procedure as appears in the "Minutes" of 1870.[86] This called for the following:

1. Total abstainence the ultimate goal of the temperance effort.

2. Preaching upon Temperance upon all suitable occasions.

3. The circulation of sound Temperance literature.

4. Discouragement of members from the renting of buildings to parties using them for the selling of liquor.

5. The conduct of monthly temperance meetings.

6. The formation of Sunday School Temperance Societies with a total abstainence pledge.

In 1881 the Conference went on record as favoring legal prohibition and instructed its ministers to do all in their power to bring about the desired end.[87]

The Women's Christian Temperance Union was recognized as a cooperating organization in the movement and commended to the people in 1887.[88]

By 1890 the Church was endeavoring to so educate its people that a Constitutional amendment might be secured which would prohibit the sale of alcohol as a beverage.[89] Most outspoken of all the reports upon Temperance is that adopted

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86 MEC, VIII, iii, 32.
87 MEC, XI, ii, 41.
88 MEC, XII, iv, 66.
89 MEC, XIII, iii, 67.

by the Conference of 1891. Its main points are herein presented to illustrate the tenor of the Temperance movement during the late years of this period.

1. That legal, constitutional prohibition of the traffic is the only remedy for this dreadful scourge.

2. That high license is a delusion and a snare, since the minions of the traffic report largest sales under its protection.

3. That we should here and now pledge ourselves anew to oppose with voice, with ballot, and with influence any and every form of license.

4. That if brewers and distillers, wholesale and retail dealers, vote for the saloon, none who vote precisely as they do can escape the charge that they also vote for this business accursed of Heaven.

5. That ministers, standing on the threshold of our Conference and promising to wholly abstain from the use of tobacco, are ever under the highest obligations to keep their pledge.

6. That we earnestly advise all our people to abstain from the use of tobacco, as a filthy, expensive, and debasing habit; and, also, we advise that they cease from handling it as an article of merchandise.

7. That we recommend in all our Congregations the organization of Temperance Alliances, whose specific object shall be opposition to the saloon in all legal and moral ways.

8. That we hereby organize an Erie Conference Temperance Society.[90]

The tobacco habit mentioned in this report was no inno-

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90 MEC, XIII, iv, 81.

vation for as early as 1869 it had the disaffection of the Church and in that year all members of the Church were requested to desist from its use insofar as it was an unnecessary luxury.[91] The tobacco habit was again censured in 1887 when the Erie Conference memorialized the General Conference of 1888 to declare the use of tobacco as an impediment to the office of bishop and also asked that it express itself relative to the use of tobacco among the itinerants and the laity.[92]

The Temperance cause was further promoted by the appointment of a Conference temperance evangelist[93] and the publication of a prohibition weekly in Franklin, Pa., which for some time enjoyed a circulation throughout the adjoining territory.[94]

The proper observance of Sunday was a matter of great religious concern to the Methodists of these years. So important was the "Santification" of the Sabbath that a Conference committee was formed in 1871.[95] Yearly this committee bemoaned what it judged the improper observance of the Sabbath. Such acts as the running of trains,[96] the pumping of

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91 MEC, VIII, ii, 8.
92 MEC, XIII, i, 67.
93 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 722.
94 Ibid.
95 MEC, VIII, iv, 39.
96 MEC, VIII, iv, 39.

oil wells,[97] the making of cheese,[98] the transportation of milk,[99] the rafting or running of lumber,[100] the reading of Sunday newspapers,[101] the opening of places of business,[102] visiting,[103] worldly conversation,[104] and the opening of the gates of camp meetings[105] were conceived as violations of the sanctity of the Sabbath, subversive to good morals in society, and dangerous to the Church of God.

In 1872 at the behest of this committee the Conference resolved that upon all proper occasions the sin of Sabbath breaking should be rebuked and that at least one sermon a year should be devoted to an exposition of the proper observance of the Christian Sabbath.[106]

It was through this committee that the Conference expressed itself opposed to immigration insofar as those coming to our shores brought with them a liberal conception of the Sabbath.[107] For this same reason the rise of Personal Liberty Leagues was viewed as a threat to the sanctity of the Sabbath.[108]

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97 MEC, VIII, iv, 39.
98 MEC, IX, iii, 34.
99 MEC, IX, iii, 34.
100 MEC, X, ii, 29.
101 MEC, XII, iv, 63.
102 MEC, XII, iv, 63.
103 MEC, IX, iii, 34.
104 MEC, IX, iii, 34.
105 MEC, IX, iii, 34.
106 MEC, X, iv, 36.
107 MEC, X, iv, 35.
108 MEC, XIII, i, 38.

The American Sabbath Union received the endorsement of the Conference in 1889 and in the same year pastors and presiding elders were censored for the use of the railroad in pursuit of their Sunday work.[109]

Popular amusements remained a religious taboo during the early years of this period and attendance at the theater and at fairs was frowned upon.[110] The report made in 1867 to the Conference by the committee on this subject contains the following items:

1. That any catering to sinister motives that are presented to the people to obtain money for benevolent objects are in no way connsant with the principles or philanthropy or religion, such as, grab-bags, ring cakes, or the setting up of benefits in the form of lotteries though by a donation to the church or preacher, and is a violation of the discipline of the church and should be dealt with as such.

2. That playing chess, checkers, dominos, dice, billiards, roll-pin, or cards in any form, or in any place is contrary to the principles taught in the word of God and should be discountenanced and rebuked by the church.

3. That the originating of baseball clubs or giving countenance to them especially when competition, challenge, or money staked, is not to be countenanced.

4. That dancing, whether in private social circle, or in promiscuous assembly has a tendency to blunt the finer feelings of our nature, wean our hearts from God, and turn our feet from the paths of virtue and religion.

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109 MEC, XIII, ii, 42.
110 MEC, VIII, iii, 34.

5. That as Christian ministers, we will endeavor to discountenance such practices in our own families and among all our people.[111]

By 1872 a slight change is to be noted in the attitude of the Church toward amusements and is significant in that it contains a positive note which respects the judgment of the individual in such matters. In this year the Conference adopted the following resolution.

> While we contend for all that is legitimate and innocent in amusement, both for the young and the old, we at the same time hold that it is not only the duty of all our people to turn away from all such baneful amusements as are referred to in the late General Conference action on the subject but also from those considered innocent when they find them creating a morbid appetite for amusement. We would council the largest charity on the subject, and affectionately urge all our people to refrain from all amusements that cannot be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.[112]

While reports upon amusements continued to appear for a number of years, as time passed Methodists thought and action were attracted to matters of greater significance and a place of decreasing importance was devoted to the denouncement of popular amusements.

From time to time during these years there appear a number of miscellaneous resolutions which further reveal the spirit of the Methodism of this time. Hardly had the period begun when the Conference saw fit to earnestly and affection-

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111 MEC, VII, iv, 34-35.
112 MEC, IX, i, 66.

ately advise its preachers and members to abstain from any connection with Free Masonry.[113]

The feeling of Methodism toward Catholicism is revealed in the report of the Bible Cause Committee of 1875 which reads,

> This today is the real battleground between Protestantism and Romanism in this country. It is a fight in which but one party can win. Did our foes rely upon reason, truth, and moral forces for success, we might quietly smile at their efforts, but we have to meet the accumulated Jesuitical cunning of the ages supported by millions of foreign subsidies, ever seeking political alliances and ready to support its claims by force. That the pope, his cardinals, and bishops are now darkly seeking by intrigue through political channels to constrain the circulation of the Bible and shut up our common schools, cannot be denied, and such is the thirst of the politicians for power that the temptation presented to political parties is sufficient to form the alliance, but such should be our love of the right, our loyalty to truth and our doctrine, to the best interest of the country, that without regard to sect or party every true Protestant should unite with his brethern in chasing the parties to such conspiracy into the darkness, and in burying them so deep that they will know no resurrection.[114]

The Mormon practice of polygamy brought forth words of sharp rebuke from the Conference. During the early 80's resolutions were frequently passed upon this matter. The first of these which appeared in 1881 contained the following items.

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113 MEC, VIII, ii, 8.
114 MEC, IX, iv, 29-30.

> That we as the pastors of the churches and teachers of the people, will faithfully instruct them upon this most important question and urge all to use their influence through all possible avenues, that those to whom is connected the great responsibility of legislation and execution of law, may truly represent the will of the Christian people respecting this abomination.
>
> That we heartily approve of the movement now in its incipiencey of the organization of the Woman's Anti-Polygamy Society.
>
> That we humbly, and yet most earnestly, petition and pray the chief executive of our nation to exercise the functions of his high office to the end and this domestic, social, civil, and religious enormity is utterly extinguished.[115]

The Conference in the next year lent its sanction to the proposed Edmund's Bill[116] as a means of removing the evil and the year following requested Congress to formulate an amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the practice of polygamy.[117] Such resolutions continued to appear until the end of the century.[118]

Certain church customs and usages of these days are here mentioned as an aid to a fuller understanding of the Methodism of these years. The love feast and class meeting appear to have commanded the respect and support of the people of these years. As late as 1887 one district reports the attendance of 65% of its membership at the Love feast while

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115 MEC, XI, ii, 38-39.
116 MEC, XI, iii, 32.
117 MEC, XII, i, 44.
118 MEC, XV, iv, 112-13.

76% were in regular attendance at class meetings.[119] Four years later, however, there is evidence that these time honored Methodist practices were commencing to be widely neglected.[120]

Children's day was first observed by the church in 1885[121] and has since continued as an annual observance of the church.

Whereas the itinerants of earlier years had waged battle against baptism by immersion, there are in these years records of its being practiced by the Methodists of this section.[122]

To facilitate the financing of the church the Conference struggled to have the individual congregations adopt a plan of systematic beneficience.[123] While many churches endeavored to make such an activity a customary practice among its people such projects appear to have made but little actual progress.

The Church Usuages of the period were those prescribed by the discipline of the Church[124] and for many years the Conference sought to have its members conform to the time honored usuage of the Church in kneeling in public and social prayer.[125]

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119 MEC, XII, iv, 37.
120 MEC, XIII, iv, 51.
121 MEC, XII, ii, 30.
122 Locke, IED, 20.
123 MEC, XI, iii, 13.
124 MEC, VIII, iv, 27.
125 MEC, IX, iv, 12.

D. Secular Conditions and Their Effect Upon Methodism.

The economic development of this region bears a definite relationship to the spread of Methodist activities. The new oil and lumber settlements, many of which came into being almost overnight, attracted the attentions of Methodism and hardly had such settlements been commenced than a Methodist congregation was formed and a church erected.[126]

However, both the oil and lumber booms came to a sudden end and periods of financial depression settled upon the area during the years between 1872 and 1879 and again between 1893 and 1897. During the former period the salaries of many of the ministers went unpaid and collections decreased.[127] The financial condition of some of the churches became so desperate that in 1879 a Conference committee was formed to relieve the plight of certain distressed churches.[128] Churches at Reynoldsville, Girard, Ridgway, Riceville, and East Brady were seriously embarrassed by debts ranging from two hundred and fifty dollars to ten thousand dollars for the payment of which their congregations were able to make no provision.[129] Nevertheless as time passed these churches were able to relieve themselves of their embarrassment.

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126 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 630, 664, 700, 775.
127 Ibid, 559; MEC, X, iii, 22.
128 MEC, X, iv, 22.
129 MEC, X, iv, 22; XI, i, 5.

The depression of the 90's settled most heavily upon the coal and iron regions in the southern portion of the area but was felt quite generally throughout the entire territory. Coal strikes and the closing of the iron furnaces in the Shenango valley seriously affected the material welfare of the Church in this area.[130] Such items as the following frequently appear in the reports of the District superintendents of this decade.

> In financial matters the work accomplished will perhaps be less than that of the previous year. The general business depression has had its effect. . . .When lack of employment has made mere living a struggle, the Church has been unable to reach the usual point in its financial work.[131]

Nevertheless, there are frequent remarks similar to the following which reflect an optimistic note.

> All have realized the severest financial struggle of our times, yet we are confident that the District has had one of its happiest and most successful years.[132]

While these depressions undoubtedly retarded the forward march of Methodism the reports of the District Superintendents during these years constantly make mention of the number of new church buildings erected, the number of church properties put into good repair, and of the progress made by various congregations in the matter of debt reduction. It is

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130 MEC, XIV, iii, 58, 72.
131 MEC, XIV, iv, 63.
132 MEC, XV, ii, 51.

also to be noted that of the collections which suffered from the depressed financial conditions of the area those for missionary activities seem to have been affected the least and appear to have been the first to recover.

The country to city movement occasioned by the rising industrialism of this area commenced to leave its mark upon the church. During the late 80's the effect of this movement is first recorded when certain rural churches were becoming a problem due to their constitutents moving away.[133] The west also claimed many of these and in one instance seventy Methodists left a single congregation and moved to the west.

Also to be noted is the lack of concern or comment on the part of the Conference with reference to the issues or effects of the Spanish American war.

E. The Methodist Ministry of the Period.

The men who delivered the message of Methodism to the people of this area in these years are to be observed that the Church of this period may be more fully understood. Many of these preachers were the sons of men who had devoted their own lives to the spreading of the gospel in this area. Evaluating the contribution of the parsonage to the Methodism of this time and place Fradenburgh has written that

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133 MEC, XIV, iv, 64.

> The Methodist parsonage has sent many preachers into the world's harvest field to gather sheaves for the Kingdom. The record which they have made is worthy, a noble one. Minister's sons have taken up the work of their fathers, and their uniform success has proved the value of their training.[134]

Yet the homes of other denominations made a significant contribution to the itinerancy of these years. Parents who were Free Will Baptists,[135] Wesleyan Methodists,[136] Catholics,[137] Congregationalists,[138] United Brethern,[139] Presbyterians,[140] and Lutherans[141] found their sons attracted to the itineracy of Methodism.

While the majority of these men were itinerants of American birth not a few of them came from Germany,[142] England,[143] Ireland,[144] and Canada.[145]

Their education background was bettered during this period. Some lacked the opportunity of higher formal education but the Conference continually set higher educational standards for its courses of study for lay preacher and

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134 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 562.
135 Ibid, 661.
136 Ibid, 661.
137 Ibid, 721.
138 Ibid, 734.
139 Ibid, 756.
140 Ibid, 549.
141 Ibid, 725.
142 Ibid, 653.
143 Ibid, 720.
144 Ibid, 757.
145 Ibid, 775.

itinerant.[146] An increasing number of Conference members appear to have received the benefit of a college education. Some enjoyed the advantage of advanced theological study and a few were so furtunate as to travel and study in the Universities of Europe.[147] Not a few of these men were in later life honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from various schools and colleges.[148]

A considerable number of those who entered the service of the Church had seen service with the army in the Civil War.[149] Others had been attracted from the professions and practice of medicine[150] and law.[151] The western Conferences attracted many and a tendency to transfer to this region is plainly distinguishable although it was not as marked as the same tendency during the previous period.[152]

Ministerial duties did not fully occupy the time of these men and some found opportunity to write.[153] Others displayed a certain native inventive genius. S. K. Paden was granted patents covering a car coupling, a hoisting apparatus, a horse hayfork, a nail plate feeder, and part of a combined

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146 MEC, VIII, iii, 38; IX, iii, 25-26; XIII, iii, 16.
147 Fradenburgh, HEC, II, 636-37.
148 Ibid, 685, 756, 758.
149 Ibid, 547-48, 555, 591, 688, 716, 776.
150 Ibid, 640, 651, 720, 739.
151 Ibid, 638.
152 Ibid, 546, 547, 654, 659, 723, 730, 756.
153 Ibid, 635, 678.

reaping and threshing machine.[154] John Lusher was the inventor of a railroad tie.[155] John Peate, when appointed presiding elder found that he had nothing to do from Monday until Friday and took up the study of astronomy and became a skilled telescope grinder.[156] The memoirs read at the Conference of 1903 following his death contained the following account of this activity.

> He, probably has made some of the finest lenses in the world. One is doing service in India; one of the best is at Harriman University, Tenn. When seventy-three at the Conference at DuBoist, he said to Bishop Hurst: "I will give as my contribution to the American University the largest lens in the world, providing I have the tools and the glass;" and at seventy-five he undertook to make a lens sixty-two inches in diameter. It was declared impossible by celebrated opticians. Glassmen insisted that the glass could not be cast. But this man had faith. He taught the glassmen to make the casting. He originated his own tools to do the grinding. Without help for two years he toiled on, and from his hand came the largest lens in the world. When he had given the finishing touch, he dropped on his knees, and thanked God that he had been spared to give his masterpiece to the world.[157]

The following anecdotes are included to provide the reader with an understanding of the character of these which no other means could provide.

> John M. Crouch before his conversion worked in the Sharon Iron Mills, and no man in Sharon in those days ever met him in physical combat successfully.

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154 Locke, IED, 13.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 MEC, XVI, iv, 92-93.

He was the fistic boss of the town. When he was pastor at Harlansburg, he exposed publicly the fact that a certain barn on an unoccupied farm was a drinking place for the owner's sons and other young men. The owner of the barn was a wealthy man of another church. He became very angry and, not feeling equal to a physical combat with Crouch, offered to pay Tom _____, a large boney man, twenty-five dollars if he would give the Methodist preacher a thrashing. Not having seen the preacher, Tom sought opportunity to watch and size him up. Crouch was buying some feed for his horse the first time he saw him. Having paid for the feed, he was about to shoulder it. The merchant said, "Wait, Reverend, and I will help you." John Crouch said, "I need no help." He threw one bag on his shoulder, then leaning over a little he grasped the neck of the second bag with his other hand, and swinging it back and forth once or twice, he threw it on top of the bag already on his shoulder with his right hand. Having seen this demonstration and having heard tales from Sharon, Tom decided that he would not take the job.[158]

Locke goes on to comment that most of the physical battles of the preachers were caused by their opposition to the liquor business.[159] The preachers were able to care for themselves in many instances and upon one occasion a local newspaper remarked that the local saloon keeper appeared as though he had been run through a thrashing machine after a fistic encounter with the local Methodist preacher.[160]

Often such prowess was utilized as the only means of maintaining order at revival meetings. Locke gives the following account of such an incident which involved a Methodist

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158 Locke, IED, 4.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.

preacher by the name of Bob Bentley who was by trade a blacksmith, through adventure a forty-niner, and who had fought John C. Henon, who was later the heavyweight champion of the world.[161] Upon this particular evening at a place known as Hell's Hollow the following incident took place.

> The usual group began to play with him on his first night. He reproved them mildly, then more sharply, but they laughed at him. Bentley stepped over the mourner's bench and grabbed the ring leader by the arm with his mighty left hand with which he was accustomed to hold and turn large iron for the striker. Sinking his nails in among the muscles, he shook his horny black fist in the face of the leader and addressed the group telling them that he would knock them all down and kick them out of the building if necessary. As he became more earnest, his grip tightened until the leader was writhing with pain. All agreed to be quiet and he went back to the pulpit. That seat full of rowdies were converted within a week and joined the church.[162]

The working conditions of the itinerants seem to have improved considerably. As charges gathered strength the number of stations increased and there was a decrease in the number of circuits. Such circuits as did exist at the end of the century would hardly have been recognized as such a hundred years before for none were more than twenty miles around.[163] Parsonages, together with heavy furniture were provided by the congregations[164] and salaries ranged from four to fifteen hundred

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161 Locke, IED, 5.
162 Ibid, 5-6.
163 MEC, XIII, iv, 60.
164 MEC, IX, i, 15.

dollars per year exclusive of house.[165] More adequate provisions were made during these years for the care of worn-out preachers for in 1886 an endowment fund was sought for this purpose.[166]

Having thus considered the characteristics of the Methodism of Northwestern Pennsylvania during the years intervening between the close of the Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century and having watched the growth of the movement, observed change and attempted change in conference jurisdiction, viewed the attitudes and activities of the Church in various matters, surveyed secular conditions together with their effect upon Methodism, and acquainted ourselves with the Methodist leadership of those years the events of the days between the dawn of the new century and the present day are now ready for contemplation.

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165 MEC, XIII, iv, 60.
166 MEC, XII, iii, 16.

CHAPTER VI

1900--1938 FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE YEAR OF THE REUNITING OF THE THREE BRANCHES OF AMERICAN METHODISM

The present chapter in the realm of time extends from a landmark in the affairs of the Methodism of northwestern Pennsylvania to a landmark in the history of American Methodism. The pertinent facts of the current division are those of the years between the beginning of the second century of organized Methodism in this territory and the reuniting of American Methodism. During these thirty-eight years many things have transpired and the current division seeks to portray the events of these years. To that end the growth and expansion of the Church together with the means of such expansion will be examined; proposed change in Conference jurisdiction will be observed; the activities and attitudes of the Church and Conference will be considered; contemporary secular conditions will be reviewed together with their effect upon the Methodism of this era; and, finally, the leadership of the Methodist movement will be studied.

A. The Growth and Expansion of Methodism.

The thirty-eight years which have passed since the beginning of a new century have witnessed a great increase in the ranks of Methodism. When the new century began 37,100 persons of this area were known as Methodists. At the time of the reuniting of Methodism 62,700 were listed upon the rolls of the Methodist Church of this territory.[1] In these thirty-eight years the membership of the movement has increased by over 25,000 persons which represents a per centage gain of more than sixty per cent. Such figures, however, should not be construed as an accurate picture of the growth of Methodism for a true picture of the growth of the Church would necessitate a consideration of the unobtainable figures relative to deaths and transiency.

Despite a great loss of rural churches occasioned by the city movement of rural population, the number of churches increased. While a fuller consideration of the aforementioned movement merits lengthier consideration later on in this chapter it will suffice to say that where there were 308 places of worship connected with the Methodist Church in 1900[2] there are to-day 342.[3] A noticeable variation in the number

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1 MEC, XXV, iii, 462 ff.
2 MEC, XVI, i, 135 ff.
3 MEC, XXV, iii, 460 ff.

of churches is evidenced in this era. Five years subsequent to the turn of the century an all-time high was attained when 395 churches were affiliated with Methodism.[4] During the next ten years a decline is noticed until there were but 316 Churches in 1915.[5] 1920 found the number at 360[6] but only 328 are listed in 1925.[7] Since that time the number has steadily increased until the present when 342 Churches are connected with Methodism in this region.

The evangelistic activities of Methodism were largely responsible for its increase during these years. Such evangelism manifested itself through a number of mediums all of which made significant contributions to the growth of the movement. The time-honored Methodist revival continued to exert a major influence throughout the period although it appears to decrease in effectiveness with the passing years. As early as 1913 the old-fashioned Methodist revival was deemed a thing of the past.[8] Yet, in the years immediately following the Armistice there appears a revival of the revival spirit, activity, and fervor.[9] During the years of the depression the revival seems to have lost much of its appeal. Nevertheless there is

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4 MEC, XVII, ii, 152 ff.
5 MEC, XVI, iv, 202 ff.
6 MEC, XXI, i, 190 ff.
7 MEC, XXII, ii, 320 ff.
8 MEC, XIX, ii, 89.
9 MEC, XI, i, 69; iii, 545-548.

scarcely a Church in which revival services are not conducted at some time during the year. Usually, however, these are conducted during the Lenten season. No other medium has had so large a part in bringing people to the Church and to Christ as has the revival meeting. In years when no other evangelistic medium has been utilized various district have reported conversions by this means upon its several charges which total as high as 1900 conversions for a single district.[10] On other districts in other years conversions ranging between 800[11] and 1700[12] have been recorded.

Methodist evangelism did not confine itself to any single type of effort and the revival was supplemented by other evangelistic technizues. The Methodists frequently combined forces with other evangelical groups in sponsoring special evangelistic drives. For some time prior to the entry of the United States into the World War success attended such enterprizes and Methodism gained its full portion of the converts. In 1907 when William (Billy) Sunday held a meeting of "unusual interest" in Sharon churches for miles around were greatly helped and the Methodist pastors were overworked with the follow-up activities which came in the wake of this meeting.[13] Another of Sunday's

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10 MEC, XXI, i, 29.
11 MEC, XVII, ii, 79.
12 MEC, XVII, i, 63.
13 MEC, XVIII, i, 91-92.

campaigns added over one thousand to the rolls of the Methodist churches of Erie.[14] Still another of Sunday's campaigns, in New Castle, resulted in over eleven thousand conversions and the New Castle district in that year, 1911, reports 3,461 as the number of Methodist conversions and credits 1,248 of that total to the city of New Castle.[15] When evangelist Beiderwolf conducted meetings in Oil City for the Protestant churches of that place over 1,400 joined the ranks of Methodism in that locality.[16] Cooperative tabernacle meetings[17] were held in the cities of the southeastern portion of the Conference with much success and there are staunch and stable members of the church to-day in that locality, with whom the writer has conversed, who trace their conversions to such meetings.

Yet another technique of evangelism employed in the larger centers of population was the community survey, which when and where supplemented with systematic visitation evangelism was attended with success.[18]

In some localities prayer group evangelism was successfully utilized.[19] Lay personal evangelism, training classes for church membership, and pastoral cooperation among the

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14 MEC, XVIII, iv, 94.
15 MEC, XVIII, iv, 103.
16 MEC, XIX, iii, 85.
17 MEC, XX, i, 63.
18 MEC, XXIII, i, 95.
19 MEC, XXIII, iv, 711.

preachers likewise contributed much to the promotion of evangelism.[20]

The camp meeting has continued down to the present although its present function is somewhat different than in the past. While several camp meetings were held during the early years of this period the Cherry Run camp meeting is the only one which survives. It is but a shadow of its former self and feebly strives to approach its position of prestege which it held in former years. Nevertheless it continues to minister to the needs of many lives.[21] It has assumed an educational function and for many years prior to 1932 was the location of the Conference training school for local preachers.[22] For some time it has served as a location for a Conference leadership training school[23] and is also the scene of an Epworth League Institute.[24]

The present place of evangelism in the program of the Church in this area together with the outlook for the future is reflected in the report on evangelism adopted by the Conference of 1937.

> Evangelism has been stressed in each district of the Conference. Special evangelistic services have been held in many of the churches for periods

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20 MEC, XXIV, i, 59.
21 MEC, XXV, ii, 236.
22 MEC, XXIV, ii, 415.
23 MEC, XXIV, iii, 451.
24 MEC, XXIV, iv, 62.

> of one to three weeks. Especially was this true of the Easter period. These services contributed to the enrichment of the lives of the membership of the churches and in many instances reconsecration of life resulted. The outstanding fact seems to be that those outside the loyal membership of the churches are busy about many things and not interested in their personal spiritual salvation. We must continue the work of evangelism throughout the year. Personal contacts must be made with those who are not affiliated with the church that they may be won to Jesus Christ. No longer can we wait for these to come to the Church. We must go out and compel them to come in.[25]

B. Proposed Changes in Conference Boundaries.

During the latter half of the second decade of the twentieth century two proposals were made which if effected would have considerably altered the bounds of the Erie Annual Conference. As in the previous period a proposal was made to consolidate the Erie and Pittsburg Conferences.[26] This proposition originated in the Erie Conference in 1927[27] and while some consideration was devoted to the matter conditions were not favorable to such a union.[28] Closely connected with such suggestions were proposals to adjust the boundaries of the Conference to those of the existing political sub-divisions.[29] However, no action was ever taken in this matter. Nevertheless

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25 MEC, XXV, ii, 236.
26 MEC, XXII, iv, 701; XXIII, i, 19.
27 MEC, XXII, iv, 692.
28 MEC, XXIII, ii, 255.
29 MEC, XXIII, i, 22; ii, 257-58; iii, 510.

the possibility of such change has lingered and the feeling of the Conference in the matter found expression in 1938 when it instructed its delegates to the Uniting Conference to request any body having jurisdiction to alter boundaries to refrain from such action in the case of the Erie Annual Conference.[30]

C. Church and Conference Attitudes and Activities.

Certain new elements appear in the life of the Church during the years of the twentieth century. Most apparent is the increasing demand for an application of the teachings of Jesus to the society of the present. The Erie Conference Social Service Commission which was formed in 1912[31] has from time to time prepared reports which having been adopted by the Conference serve to describe the position of the latter body in many matters bearing upon present-day conditions. Such an emphasis in Methodism must not be construed as as abandonment of its message of personal salvation in favor of a program of mere social readjustment. Rather Methodism recognizes the place of both these aspects of the message of Christianity and seeks an effective working union of the two,[32] and the spiritual aspects of Christianity are today, as ever, greatly stressed.[33] Here-

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30 MEC, XXV, iii, 390.
31 MEC, XIX, i, 41.
32 MEC, XXV, ii, 245.
33 MEC, XXIV, iv, 453-4.

inafter appears the social creed of the Erie Conference Federation for Social Service which is included to indicate the stand of the Methodism of this area in many matters of social consequence.

We believe that the Methodist Episcopal Church stands:

1. For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.

2. For the protection of the family, by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage and proper housing.

3. For the fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of proper education and recreation.

4. For the abolition of child labor.

5. For such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

6. For the abatement and prevention of poverty.

7. For the protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of the liquor traffic.

8. For the conservation of health.

9. For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injuries and mortality.

10. For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachment of every kind, and for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment.

11. For suitable provision for old age of the workers and for those incapacitated by injury.

12. For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

13. For a release from employment one day in seven.

14. For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practicable basis, so that all the work available may be distributed to the greatest number of workers possible, at an adequate living wage.

15. For a living wage which will provide the necessary things of life and which will also allow for saving and cultural advantages, as the minimum wage in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

16. For the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

17. For the right of employees and employers alike to organize in accordance with thorough-going democratic and Christian procedure.

18. For a new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property in that we shall endeavor to take seriously the teachings of Jesus as they apply to the acquisition, control and use of private property and money.

19. For opposition to terrorism in every form in local, state, national and internation affairs.

20. For the hearty support of the Constitution of the United States of America and especially that part which guarantees free speech, free assembly and free press.

21. We believe that War is anti-Christian and we, therefore are opposed to increased armaments. We favor the settlement of all international disputes by arbitration and treaties and by the application of Christian principles to the issues at stake.[34]

The foregoing creed is the culmination of several years of

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[34] MEC, XXV, ii, 247-248.

Conference thought upon such matters as are therein contained. In previous years Methodism had expressed itself against many of the evils therein ennumerated as well as several others. As early as 1908 it had deplored the lightness with which some accepted the marriage vows together with the increase in the divorce rate.[35] It also saw fit to denounce the white slave traffic at its sessions of 1908, 1911, and 1913.[36] It continued its condemnation of Mormonism until 1914 due to its bias toward bigamy and its increasing political influence.[37] It looked askance at certain features of immigration[38] and voiced its disapproval of alien representation in the halls of government,[39] yet Methodism deplored racial discrimination and continued its cooperation with the Freedman's Aid and Southern Education Society until the days of the world war.

Methodism found itself unable to sanction certain practices in the field of industrial relationships and child labor, sweat shops, low wages, industrial warfare, violence, mob rule, and abuse of the coal and iron police received the censure of the Church.[40]

In the field of international relations it renounced

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35 MEC, XVIII, i, 129; ii, 98.
36 MEC, XVIII, i, 88; iv, 139; XIX, ii, 120 ff.
37 MEC, XVI, i, 27; 110; XIX, ii, 134; iii, 154.
38 MEC, XXII, i, 98.
39 MEC, XXIII, iii, 514; XXIV, iii, 445; XXV, iii, 329.
40 MEC, XVII, iv, 38; XVIII, ii, 99; iii, 132; iv, 139; XXII, iii, 541; XXIII, i, 90.

economic imperialism,[41] war, war profiteers and munition makers.[42] It denounced the European war in its early years[43] but upon America's entry Methodism lent the full support of its influence in this area to the American position.[44]

The policies of Methodism, however, were not essentially those of condemnation and it lent its sanction to many things in a positive manner. It manifested an interest in the field of interdenominational cooperation and proposals for church union and where it had, in earlier years, been unfriendly to other denominations it now sought to effect certain elements of cooperation.[45] Nevertheless its attitude toward Catholicism was not entirely friendly[46] and today its attitude is but one of courteous toleration. The Children's Home movement gained the support of Methodism[47] in the days prior to the founding of a Children's Home by the Conference. Methodism has been insistent in its demand for law enforcement.[48] Especially was this true in the prohibition era. While it discountenanced political corruption[49] it at the same time expressed itself in favor

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41 MEC, XXIV, ii, 275.
42 MEC, XXV, iii, 444-445.
43 MEC, XIX, iii, 33, 53; iv, 153.
44 MEC, XX, ii, 52, 66; iii, 507-515, 517-518, 521, 539.
45 MEC, XIX, i, 41; iv, 22; XX, i, 58, XXII, ii, 253; iv, 749.
46 MEC, XIX, iii, 233-234.
47 MEC, XIX, i, 54; iii, 125.
48 MEC, XXII, i, 97.
49 MEC, XVIII, iv, 139; XXIII, i, 28; XXV, ii, 245.

of a wider use of the Civil Service.[50]

Not only were new attitudes typical of the Methodism of this era but certain new Methodist activities were inaugurated. During this period two homes were established by the Conference and are located in the area of this study. The Ida M. Cribbs Home for the Aged, located at Conneautville, Pa., was projected in 1918[51] and first opened in 1920.[52] It was reincorporated in 1925[53] and continuing to the present cares for about one hundred aged persons. In 1922 the Ruth M. Smith Home for Children was established at Sheffield, Pa., and today is caring for over fifty orphaned and homeless children.

A small amount of hospital work has been noted in the preceeding chapter but in these years an increasing interest was manifested in this type of benevolence. While no Methodist hospital lies within the area the Methodists of this region became, with the Conference, patrons of St. Luke's hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1913.[54] When a new building was projected in 1924 the Erie Conference assumed $100,000 of the cost of erection and the major portion of this amount was contributed by the Methodists of northwestern Pennsylvania.[55] Since that

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50 MEC, XXIV, ii, 634; XXV, iii, 446.
51 MEC, XX, iii, 484.
52 MEC, XXV, i, 75, 92-93.
53 MEC, XXII, ii, 262.
54 MEC, XIX, ii, 20.
55 MEC, XXII, i, 10.

time the people of this area have made considerable contributions to the support and unkeep of this institution.

Another activity of the Church in this region was occasioned by the large influx of people of foreign birth and tongue during the early years of the century. As early as 1902[56] plans were made for the establishment of missions among the foreign settlers in mining camps and industrialized cities. Much difficulty attended the inauguration of this work[57] yet Americanization classes seemed to gain the confidence of these people and by 1906 some progress was recorded in these activities.[58] By 1907 the first Italian church was formed[59] and the following year found one in New Castle with 120 members.[60] Since the war the work of this type has centered in and about the city of New Castle although in preceeding years it had been carried on in the mining areas of Clarion county and in the grape belt along the lake shore. In the former place the work flourished and by 1925 this field was equal to that of the same type of any other area of Methodism.[61] By the following year the Italian Church at Hillsville (near New Castle) was ajudged to surpass all the other bi-lingual churches of the denomina-

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56 MEC, XVI, iii, 74, 85.
57 MEC, XVII, i, 65.
58 MEC, XVII, iii, 51.
59 MEC, XVII, iv, 79.
60 MEC, XVIII, i, 91.
61 MEC, XXII, ii, 301.

tion in its progress and status.[62] The work among the Italians continued strong until the depression[63] but its nature together with the limited help which the church is able to give demands that it grow less and less with the passing years "by reason of the fact that youth educated in American schools will go to American churches."[64]

The Methodists of this area not only arrived at new positions and undertook new enterprizes but continued its positions and activities of preceeding years. Outstanding among the activities which were continued were the educational activities of the Church. The Sunday School was emphasized by the movement and it continued to grow until the depression. At the beginning of the century 39,000 were enrolled in the Sunday Schools of Methodism in this section.[65] By 1925 the figure had reached 72,200[66] but the depression years witnessed a sharp decline in Sunday School members and there are today but 56,200 affiliated with the Sunday School in the Methodist Church.[67] A decline is likewise noticed in the number of Sunday Schools and where there had been 391 schools[68] at the beginning of this period there are but 331 now.[69] It is to be

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62 MEC, XXII, iii, 530.
63 MEC, XXII, iv, 241.
64 MEC, XXIII, ii, 293.
65 MEC, XVI, i, 135 ff.
66 MEC, XXII, ii, 322 ff.
67 MEC, XXV, iii, 460 ff.
68 MEC, XVI, i, 135 ff.
69 MEC, XXV, iii, 460 ff.

noted, however, that during the period of the depression the number of schools decreased but ten.

New departments were added to the Sunday School and in the opening year of the century the home, cradle roll, nursery, and primary departments were being organized.[70] Bible Classes were introduced in 1910[71] and met with much success during the succeeding years.[72] By the middle of the period all the Sunday Schools were being conducted on a year-around schedule.[73] More recently there has been increased emphasis placed upon the improvement of Sunday School organization, administration, and instruction methods.[74]

So strong did this feature of the Church's educational program become that it soon arrived at a place where it was competing with the Church itself[75] and much concern has been expressed in more recent years not only on this account but also concerning the growing breach between the church and Sunday School.[76]

A new educational feature which appeared was the Daily Vacation Bible School which was first inaugurated in 1922[77] and since that time this pedagogical device has been widely

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70 MEC, XVIII, i, 112.
71 MEC, XVIII, iii, 76.
72 MEC, XIX, iv, 104.
73 MEC, XIX, ii, 80.
74 MEC, XXII, i, 68.
75 MEC, XVII, ii, 81.
76 MEC, XXII, ii, 293; XXIV, iv, 628
77 MEC, XXI, iii, 541.

used in the cities and towns and where utilized has met with much success.[78]

For a time, prior to the depression, the Conference employed a Director of Religious Education and in 1936 the body expressed itself in favor of the recreation of that office as soon as conditions would permit.[79]

So great has the interest of the Conference become in the field of education that a Board of Education within the Conference has been formed.[80] The Conference has also been instrumental in providing opportunities for ministerial training and for some years a school for local preachers was conducted at the site of the Cherry Run Camp Ground. Likewise the Conference has, in cooperation with the other Conferences of the Pittsburg Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, lent its support to a Summer School of Theology in more recent years. Opportunities have also been provided for the training of lay leaders and gatherings for this purpose have been held at various times throughout the region.

Another educational venture was the Conneaut Lake Assembly[81] which was modelled after the famous assembly at Chautauqua, New York, in which the Methodists of this region continued

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78 MEC, XXI, iv, 756.
79 MEC, XXV, i, 33.
80 MEC, XXIII, ii, 299.
81 MEC, XVI, i, 69, 83.

to manifest much interest. However, the environment of the assembly became commercialized to an extent which made the Church undesirable of continuing its affiliation with such an enterprize subsequent to 1910.[82]

Allegheny College retained its connection with the Conference and Methodism during the entirety of the period despite two unsuccessful attempts to dissolve the relationship existing between these bodies. The first of these was made in 1910;[83] the second in 1914.[84]

During this period the college made much progress and the reports concerning it which were presented annually to the Conference reveal an increasing prosperity throughout the period. Its campus was extended and new buildings were provided, its endowment was increased and its pedagogical devices have been constantly improved, and while its enrollment has been voluntarily restricted, the college today occupies a position of leadership among similiar institutions of the nation. Its students, now numbering eight hundred, have more and more come from selected scholastic groups and for the past decade a high percentage of its graduates have continued their education in graduate and professional schools. During these years the college has made no small contribution to the leadership of the

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82 MEC, XVIII, ii, 98-99.
83 MEC, XVIII, iii, 135-41.
84 MEC, XIX, iii, 129.

church, the region, and the nation at large.

Methodism also found opportunity to express its sentiments in relation to the secular and religious press. Most distasteful to Methodism was the crass commercialization of the press in its emphasis on the morbidly spectacular and its disregard of the finer sensitivities of man.[85] The Sunday newspaper likewise called forth the criticism of the Church. In its efforts to combat the undesirable effects of the secular press the Church has sought to lay increased emphasis upon religious periodicals and publications. Not only has the Church insisted upon the exclusive use of Methodist literature in its Sunday Schools but it has promoted subscription campaigns for such periodicals as the "Pittsburg Christian Advocate," "Religion in Life," "Advance," "Prohibition Defender," "Gospel in All Lands," "World Wide Missions," "Epworth Herald," and the "Upper Room."

The temperance activities of the Conference continued during the entire period. Every Methodist minister came to be known as a "red-hot prohibitionist" and a Conference Temperance Evangelist was employed until the days of the Eighteenth Amendment. Much of the responsibility for making this territory dry belongs to the Methodist Church and even today in those communities where the privilege of local option is exercised

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[85] MEC, XXIII, ii, 514; XXIV, i, 13; iv, 11.

Methodist preachers have aggitated the temperance issue with much success. The Methodists were staunch in their support of the Prohibition Amendment as may have been gathered from a previous reference to their demands for law enforcement. The Church deplored the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and does everything in its power to battle the evils of the post-repeal era. The Anti-saloon League has been recognized throughout this period as a cooperating agency and the Methodist pulpit has always been open to representatives of that Cause.[86]

Not only did the Church continue its condemnation of the use of liquors but it maintained its traditional position with respect to the use of tobacco. While this aspect of temperance has not been the subject of such activity as was caused by the liquor issue the Methodists have nevertheless stood firmly upon its traditional position.

Methodism still clings to its traditional insistence upon Sabbath observance. While this matter was the subject of much attention until the 1920's it has occupied a position of decreasing importance since that time. Perhaps the indication of the trend is revealed in the report quoted at the beginning of this section of this chapter which calls for one day's rest in seven. Nevertheless, the Conference of the same year, 1937, asserted itself in favor of a reemphasis upon the older posi-

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86 MEC, XVI, i, 36; XIX, ii, 134.

tion of Methodism relative to this matter.

The missionary interest of the Church continued and increased. Both the Women's Foreign and the Women's Home Missionary Societies grew and prospered. Despite the fact that there was a slight decline in missionary giving and in the membership of the societies during the years of the early thirties, the missionary societies are today far stronger and of more significance to the work of the Church than they were at the beginning of the century. The two aforementioned women's societies have been responsible for the greatest portion of the missionary giving of the Church of this area although their efforts have been supplemented since 1925[87] by the contributions for World Service which have become a part of the regular Sunday offerings received by the several churches. In the past few years the Conference assumed a position of leadership in the Million Unit Fellowship Movement (a plan to stimulate missionary giving) and the Methodists of northwestern Pennsylvania have taken their full portion of the responsibility of raising the 10,172 units subscribed by the Conference.[88]

Other missionary societies were formed during this era. The Sunday Schools were organized into missionary societies and organizations were provided to stimulate missionary interest

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[87] MEC, XXII, ii, 286.
[88] One unit equals one dollar per month per year.

among people of all ages. Societies such as the Mother's Jewels and The King's Hearlds were formed for younger children. The Standard Bearers were children too old for the former organizations and the Queen Esther Societies were for young women interested in the progress and promotion of missions.

A number of missionaries went out from this area. Miss Silvia Barnes went to Singapore under the auspices of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in 1925.[89] The Conference supports a parish in Angola, Africa, where Ralph E. Dodge, Alexander Kemp, and Alexander Klebstatle of the Conference are now serving.[90]

The Ladies Aid Societies which had been formed in the preceeding period under the name of the Ladies' and Pastors' Christian Union continued their work through these years of the twentieth century. This Society did splendid work on all the appointments of the region throughout this entire period. During the years of the late depression their activities and loyal support prevent many of the churches from closing their doors and much of the credit for the support and showing made by the individual churches belongs to the ladies of these organizations.[91] In addition to assisting in the financing of the church budgets they have cared for the upkeep and repair of

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89 MEC, XXII, ii, 301.
90 MEC, XXV, i, 60; ii, 237, 244.
91 MEC, XXIV, ii, 267.

the parsonages, in some instances providing them with the heavier furnishings, cared for local charity, and spread cheer and assistance to the sick.

Men's activities have had a place in the program of the Church. While the participation of the men has not been as auspicious as that of the women in the activities of the church many have lent strong support to such organizations as have been formed for the men of the church. In the first decade of the period the Brotherhood movement was inaugurated and it was hoped that a Brotherhood might be organized in every Church.[92] During the years preceeding the outbreak of the World War many of these organizations were formed. However, the appearance of the Men's Bible Classes, sponsored by the Sunday School, served to function in the stead of the former organization and its place was occupied by this organization of the Sunday School.[93] At other times during the period attempts were made to revive the Brotherhood movement but at no time did they meet with universal success. In the past few years the Lay Activities Movement was inaugurated in this region[94] and was greeted with much enthusiasm and contained much promise. However, the reorganization of men's work effected by the Uniting Conference has necessitated the abandonment of this program in favor of

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92 MEC, XVIII, ii, 57-59.
93 MEC, XIX, iii, 84.
94 MEC, XXV, ii, 234; iii, 432.

another designed by that body which has yet to be presented to the men of this territory.

Work among the young people of this region likewise continued to command the efforts of Methodism. The Epworth League continued until 1910 to boast of 11,000 members in this area.[95] Succeeding years, however, saw a decline in the membership of these groups and by 1920 their membership had dropped to 8,000.[96] In 1930 only 7,200 were thus enrolled.[97] In the next five years --mostly depression years--the enrollment increased about 300.[98] During the past three years a marked decrease is noted and but 5,600 members were reported to the Conference of 1938.[99]

Despite the unfavorable statistical record of the Epworth League in this region its organization has been constantly improved and it is rendering a definite spiritual, social, and recreational service to the young people of the Church. In addition to its local organization in each of the churches there are also sub-district, district, and Conference Epworth League organizations which from time to time conduct rallies and institutes in various places. Annually the Conference Institutes are held at Cherry Run Camp Ground and on the Campus of Allegheny College. During the summer of 1939 these two institutes

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95 MEC, XVIII, iii, 170 ff.
96 MEC, XXI, i, 190 ff.
97 MEC, XXIII, iii, 520 ff.
98 MEC, XXIV, iv, 645 ff.
99 MEC, XXV, iii, 460 ff.

provided over five hundred of the youth of the Conference with a week of instruction and recreation.

There are also several junior leagues for those who are not of Epworth League age. In some of the city churches junior church services are conducted and elsewhere in this chapter the organization of the young into missionary societies has been treated.

Some non-religious organizations for young people have been sponsored by the Church and many churches have troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. In the earlier days an organization known as the Kingits of King Arthur was formed in several of the Churches.[100]

All of these organizations--men's, women's, and young people's--have served to effect an increased emphasis upon the social and recreational side of the Church's function and during this period there is found an increasing place being accorded to such activities.

Other changes are observable during this period. So far as the customs and practices of the movement are concerned several changes are to be noted. The class meeting and the love feast which had manifested signs of decreased interest in certain years of the preceeding period now disappear. While they did exist in the years prior to America's entry to the

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100 MEC, XIX, iii, 54.

World War and in those yeard did evidence many signs of vitality there is not a sign of them today and this feature of Methodism which existed in this area for over a century disappeared almost a quarter of a century ago. So it has been with the love feast and with the exception of an annual love feast held at the seat of the annual Conference. Likewise the midweek service or the prayer meeting which was as late as 1914[101] a poignant factor in this spiritual life of the Church. Following the World War a certain disinterest and indifference toward this segment of the Church's spiritual life appears.[102] While the prayer meeting still exists it is attended only by the "faithful few" and appears to be one of the passing aspects of Methodism. Some attempts to remedy this situation were made by the use of Church night and where it was tried it met with apparent success.[103] However, it has not been placed in universal use and consequently no startling results have been produced by this medium.

Some concept of the personal religious practices of the Methodists of this area may be obtained from the results of a questionaire used in this region in 1936. It revealed that 38 per cent of the laity had family worship in the home; 65 per cent returned thanks at the table; 44 per cent read the Bible

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101 MEC, XIX, iii, 83.
102 MEC, XXI, i, 68.
103 MEC, XXI, iv, 756.

daily; 52 per cent said they had the weekly prayer meeting on their schedule; and 47 per cent were striving to bring at least one person to Christianity each year.[104]

D. Secular Conditions and Their Effect Upon Methodism.

The rising industrialism of the twentieth century set into motion a number of forces which seriously effected the welfare of Methodism. The rural church problem which came to have a pronounced effect upon the welfare of the Church was a result of the concurrence of conditions occasioned by this phenomenon. Already the commencement of a rural church problem have been noted in the preceeding chapter and the passing years of the present period found this problem constantly becoming more acute. Scarcely a single year passes in these years but the conference authorizes the abandonment and sale of one or more rural churches.

One of the primary causes of the rural church problem was the country to city movement of the population. As early as 1907 the following comment is found in the reports of the District Superintendents.

> The great majority of our churches are located in the country communities, where the tendency on the part of the young and vigorous to migrate from the country farm to the city factories is most keenly felt. Many of our pastors have to exert constant

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104 MEC, XXIV, iv, 48.

and vigorous efforts to guard against a decrease in membership on account of this activity.[105]

Other reports upon this matter appear through the years. Representative of their content are these words culled from the District Superintendent's reports of 1926.

> One of the greatest problems of the Methodist Church today is the condition of the rural church. I say it is a Methodist problem because heretofore we have specialized in this kind of churches more than any other denomination. . . .But today these churches are facing insuperable difficulties.[106]

The best single comment upon the situation is found in the reports of the District Superintendents in 1920. It reads:

> Some of the largest problems of the Church you find in the village, town and rural community. Three-fourths of a century ago the Fathers of our Church wrought throughout our territory and established the Church. Twenty-five years ago the Church was strong where today it is weak. In some communities the House of God is closed. Fathers and mothers have gone home. Sons and daughters have sold the farm and gone to the city where shop and business promise more than the farm. Strangers have come that know not our God and do not care to know Him. Italian, Slav, Hungarian and others are coming to the country in droves; the school house that has been closed for lack of children will be open tomorrow. The foreigner multiplies. How about the closed Church? . . .The over churched village and country side is a problem. With four churches ministering to a community of six hundred people, we hear the cry, "too many churches," but when we go into a like community and find one church and about the same number of worshippers as we find in one of the four in the other community, I fear to lessen the number of churches will increase rather than diminish our problem.[107]

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105 MEC, XVII, iv, 95.
106 MEC, XXII, iii, 515.
107 MEC, XXI, i, 76.

The exploitation of natural resources by large outside corporations which created settlements and then abandoned them and their inhabitants as soon as the oil, coal, or timber was depleted played an important role in the creation of the rural church problem.[108] An incident which will serve to illustrate this situation is found in the Methodist Church located in the lumber settlement of Nansen. This Church had been established some time prior to the opening of the century and in 1904 reported an increase of 500% in church membership in one year, yet, ten years later, in 1914, this Church was declared abandoned and its property sold.

Numberous devices were employed to alleviate the country church problem. All these appear to have met with some temporary success but lacking continued application were productive of very little in the way of lasting benefit. Country church auto caravans which visited various country churches in the days when the automobile was yet a novelty seem to have instilled new life into these churches.[109] The Brotherhood movement likewise took an active interest in the rehabilitation of certain rural churches and some good was accomplished by this means.[110] Gospel teams were likewise utilized.[111]

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108 MEC, XVII, ii, 80; XVIII, ii, 60; XX, ii, 62.
109 MEC, XIX, ii, 89.
110 MEC, XXIII, iii, 500.
111 MEC, XXI, i, 69.

Country Church Institutes were held in several places[112] and Rural Preachers Associations were formed.[113] Deaconess work was utilized in some areas and where tried resulted in much success.[114] In some instances the erection of Community Houses served to remedy the situation.[115] While a certain improvement is noted in the condition of the rural church in the early 1920's[116] it is to be noted that in some places Community Churches appeared and claimed the adherents of Methodism.[117] By 1930 the larger parish plan was inaugurated[118] but has been productive of no outstanding success.

The gradual decline of many of the rural churches caused much hardship on their pastors and the hardships which were endured by many of them were equal to those of the clergy of any other period of Methodism.[119]

Despite the foregoing there appears to be a new life manifest in the rural churches in recent years and as the writer has traveled throughout the area the observation has been made that the rural Churches of Methodism are being placed in a state of good repair and are yet active in ministering to the spir-

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112 MEC, XX, i, 73; XXI, i, 300.
113 MEC, XXI, iii, 415.
114 MEC, XXI, ii, 294-295.
115 MEC, XXI, i, 300.
116 MEC, XXI, ii, 294; iv, 766.
117 MEC, XXI, i, 277.
118 MEC, XXIII, iii, 499.
119 MEC, XX, ii, 61-62.

itual needs of the rural areas.

While the country to city movement of the population was adversely affecting the rural churches of Methodism it was at the same time contributing to the upbuilding of the city churches for with the growing cities they increase in number and membership.[120]

The territory of northwestern Pennsylvania has been noticeably free from prolonged and violent industrial warfare but some strikes have occurred which have been of sufficient size, duration and consequence as to hamper the activities of the church.[121]

The years of plenty had a marked effect upon the Church. Its spiritual progress was sometimes retarded by this and is expressed in the reports of the District Superintendents in 1907.

> Our amazing material prosperity is bringing a curse along with its blessings. There is a mania for money and a pagan lust for pleasure as the chief end of life. There is a spirit of worldliness among our people which is at variance with the teachings of God's word and unfriendly to the conditions that secure growth in grace. The spirit is seen in a negligence in attendance upon the devotional and revival services of the church; a carelessness in the regular observance of family worship; a lax observance of the Sabbath as a holy day; a disposition on the part of many to make the church a mere social instead of a spiritual center and a seeking after such diversions as may not be "used in the name of the Lord Jesus." On the part of many

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120 MEC, XVI, ii, 68; iii, 284; XVII, iii, 97; iv, 75.
121 MEC, XVIII, ii, 72; iii, 87; XXI, iii, 549.

> good men and women there is an unwillingness to make an open avowal of their faith in Jesus Christ, and we have no longer as we once had the support and sympathy of the toiling masses of the common people. Even in the ranks of the ministry of our church we too often discover a secular spirit, a reaching after financial advancement, a restlessness under the itch of ambition for place and power.[122]

Nevertheless the Church secured its full share of the benefits of material prosperity and larger, better planned, and more beautiful places of worship were built than ever before in the Conference. Many were equipped with splendid recreational and educational units and where instrumental music had once been barred from Methodist houses of worship were now found Churches equipped with pipe organs and pianos. Some Community houses were erected and practically every charge was provided with a parsonage.[123]

Likewise, in prosperous years, salaries were much increased as were the offerings for benevolent enterprizes.[124]

The several business depressions which settled upon the country influenced the life and activity of the church in this area. The most serious periods of economic trial were in the years between 1904 and 1911, during 1914 and 1915, in 1921 and 1922, and from 1929 until the present time. However, it is to be noted that there are relatively few years in this period

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122 MEC, XVII, iv, 140.
123 MEC, XXII, ii, 289; iii, 518.
124 MEC, XVIII, iv, 93; XXI, i, 76; iii, 54; XXII, ii, 287; iii, 511, 524, 512.

during which the cry of hard times does not arise from some section of the work. Through many of these depression years the work of the Church held up well and at times the salaries of the pastors were increased and the benevolent enterprizes of the church fully cared for.[125] This seems to have been true of the depressions prior to 1929 although in some instances considerable hardship was felt by the pastors in previous depressions.[126] In some instances when the full impact of the situation was felt some churches found themselves in a condition of serious distress.[127] This was largely occasioned by the fact that some congregations had built magnificent churches in times when building costs were high and had failed to make adequate arrangements to care for the financial obligations incurred and as a consequence there came a time when there was a serious danger of these churches passing from the control of Methodism.[128] During the past few years much has been done to clear the Methodist Churches in the area of debt but there yet remain a number of congregations which bear large burdens of debt.[129] In many instances the salaries of the pastors were noticeably decreased and some suffered considerable inconven-

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125 MEC, XVII, i, 68, 722; iii, 81; XVIII, i, 84; iv, 97; XIX, iv, 102-3.
126 MEC, XX, ii, 61-62.
127 MEC, XVII, i, 118; XXV, i, 22-23, 45.
128 MEC, XVIII, ii, 72; iv, 97; XXIV, i, 69-70; ii, 265; XXV, i, 45.
129 MEC, XXV, iii, 429.

ience on this account. Likewise there was a noticeable decrease in the offerings for the benevolent enterprizes of the Church[120] and this tendency manifested itself most distinctly in the decrease of world service giving.[131] Mission collections likewise decreased and many withdrew from the missionary societies because of their inability to pay dues.[132]. The work of the bi-lingual missions in the area seriously suffered from the depression.[133] Likewise declines are to be noticed in church and Sunday School enrollment during the years of the late depression. While church membership rolls have reclaimed their depression losses and moved to new highs, the decline in Sunday School membership has not as yet been arrested.

While it would appear that the Church suffered much due to the depressions a number of comments are hereinafter presented that the spirit of the Church in these trying times may be better understood. In the "Minutes" of 1908 the following is to be noted,

> Times have been hard, work slow, and money scarce; and yet most of our charges have made a splendid showing.[134]

In 1911 is found,

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130 MEC, XIX, iii, 88; iv, 95-96; XXII, i, 81; iv, 724-727; XXIII, i, 58, 283; ii, 489; iii, 705, 722; XIV, ii, 265-66.
131 MEC, XXIII, iii, 489; XXIV, i, 722; iii, 265.
132 MEC, XXIV, ii, 267.
133 MEC, XXIV, ii, 266.
134 MEC, XVII, i, 84.

> The low price of oil has caused some depression in financial circles but the noble lay men have in no instance allowed the low price of oil to lower the pastor's salaries, but in several instances the salaries have been increased rather than lowered.[135]

In more recent years the following statements are to be noted,

> The district (New Castle) has suffered its share of the general financial depression. Some coal mines have shut down entirely, others work part time. Farmers have poor crops and poor markets. Some mills have not turned a wheel for months, others run part time. Laborers have little or nothing to do. Many business men keep just a "jump ahead of the sheriff." In spite of all this many churches have fought valiantly and won signal victories.[136]

America's participation in the World War exerted a conditioning influence upon the work of the Church. Methodism was proud of the fact that a number of the students of Allegheny college were among the first Americans on the field of conflict[137] and the Conference was hearty in its support of America's participation in the debacle. The following selections from the reports of the District Superintendents serve to reveal the nature of such support and the effect of the war upon the Church:

> The added burdens of the War with its "drives" for the gathering of money and material, the many calls for service on committees, the services as the boys have started for the camps, the correspondence with the ones who have gone from the churches, and the Sunday Schools have tended to make this one of the most exacting, and busy years in the history of the

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135 MEC, XVIII, iv, 97.
136 MEC, XXIII, iii, 501.
137 MEC, XX, ii, 67.

> district. It is with no little gratitude that we are able to report that the Methodists have in every charge, as the service flags in most churches will show, furnished their full share of men, as well as money, and material, for the work of the war, and that the ministers of the District have been recognized as leaders in this work and have shown themselves well equipped for the responsibility. Not only have they helped in the work at home but several of them have visited the training camps and have had the great satisfaction of seeing the soldiers of their country, become soldiers in the Army of the Lord.[138]

From the Jamestown District much of which lay in Pennsylvania came this report.

> Two hundred and fifty-two sermons with special messages upon the war have been preached upon the district. Our pastors have made two hundred and thirty-nine special patriotic addresses. Forty-two pastors have forty-six war gardens. There are seven hundred and fourteen war gardens in our churches beside those in nineteen charges in which every family has a war garden. In every last church of the district our women are co-operating heartily with the Red Cross. Ten church organizations have purchased Liberty Loans. One pastor took his Boy Scouts and harvested thirty acres of beans which would otherwise have spoiled, and the same pastor took the same Boy Scouts and sold thirty thousand dollars worth of Liberty Bonds. One pastor has organized and trained fifty men as Home Defense Guards, and this comes near to militant Methodism. In some of the charges the pastors have been leaders in the drives for Liberty Loans, Red Cross, War Saving Stamps, Y. M. C. A., and general war activities. Indeed, there has been no appeal made by our Government or any organization in behalf of real patriotism which has not found a ready response in our people. Thirty-three churches have service flags dotted with silver stars and a few gold stars which represent the supreme sacrifice and consecration of the best young manhood that our parsonages and homes

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138 MEC, XX, iii, 507.

and schools and churches and civilization can produce.[139]

Such activities could not but have an effect upon the spiritual aspects of the life of the church and a spirit of indifference paralyzing and deadly in its effects was noted in a number of churches.[140] The advent of the World War marks the disappearance of certain Methodist customs such as the class meeting and love feast and marks the beginning of a religious indifference which has manifested itself in the decline of the prayer meeting and which has been otherwise noticeable. These things have been previously dealt with in more detail. The enlistment and drafting of young men made deep inroads upon the Sunday Schools.[141] At the same time, however, there are evidences of the people taking adequate care of the material aspects of the church.[142]

The settlement of large numbers of foreign born in the area gave rise to the bi-lingual missions which are mentioned elsewhere in this chapter.

A number of calamities in various parts of the world claimed the sympathies of the Methodists of this area during these years. The Church was to be found lending aid through special collections to alleviate situations which were caused

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139 MEC, XX, ii, 515-516.
140 MEC, XX, ii, 518.
141 MEC, XX, ii, 517.
142 MEC, XX, ii, 517.

by the San Francisco earthquake and fire,[143] the Japanese earthquake,[144] and the floods in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.[145]

E. The Ministry of the Period.

While handicapped by the lack of the detailed biographical collections which have characterized the sources of the preceeding periods, certain observations may be made concerning the leadership which the Church has enjoyed in these years of the present chapter. The twentieth-century ministry of the Church in this area bore many marks of resemblance to that of previous years, yet differed from it in many respects. Most of the preachers were of Methodist home and parentage and a considerable number were reared in the Methodist parsonages of the area. The diversity of belief and nationality of the homes and parentage of the preachers which was much manifest in preceeding periods is not so clearly evidenced but, nevertheless, homes of other faiths and of various nationalities did make a contribution to the leadership of the Church in these days. The preachers of this period appear to be more settled than those of former years and by comparison with them there is relatively little transferring on their part to other Conferences or denominations. Likewise there is little influx from either of

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143 MEC, XVII, iii, 75.
144 MEC, XXII, i, 73.
145 MEC, XXV, i, 12; ii, 213.

the aforementioned sources into the Conference.

The twentieth century saw a demand for educated men in the pulpit and throughout these years there is an ever increasing tendency to raise the standards of the formal educational requirements of the preacher. As early as 1911[146] the pew was demanding prepared pastors. Its demands are expressed in the following comment which represents a composite picture of the requests made by the laity to a district superintendent in 1913.

> We want a good sermonizer and worker. A man of middle age, a hustler. Not a worn-out old man and not a young man who will spend all his time in preparatory work. . . .We want a minister who has been through the schools. One who is well educated. A man who can go into the lawyer's office and talk law intelligently to the lawyer; and into the physician's office and talk medicine intelligently to the physician; and out on the farm and talk scientific farming intelligently to the farmer. He must be a good mixer, one who would draw the crowds, one who would interest the young people and fill up the vacant pews. In short an all-around practical man. Then they wanted that man for $700, or at least they were having their man for that amount; and he had to keep a horse too.[147]

To provide for the education of preachers the Conference Course of instruction and examination were enlarged and stiffened and schools for the training of local preachers and a summer school of theology were provided for those who lacked the opportunity to secure the benefits of higher formal education. By 1926,[148] however, the Conference was recommending

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146 MEC, XVIII, iv, 101.
147 MEC, XIX, ii, 77-78.
148 MEC, XXII, iii, 451.

that candidates for admission to the Conference secure seminary training and in 1937 one year's attendance in a church accredited theological school or seminary in addition to graduation from a recognized college was required of prospective Conference members.[149]

The working conditions of the ministers have been much improved. Salaries were low, in present-day terms, during the days previous to the World War. Many charges then payed but $700 annually and $2,500 represented the apex of pecuniary attainment of a minister.[150] In 1912 the first suggestions for the provision of adequate support for preachers appears[151] but nothing was to be done in this matter until the 1930's. By 1921 salaries had so increased as to make the average salary on one district--the Erie--$1,987. In 1930[152] a committee was appointed to study the matter of the minimum salary and two years later members of the Conference were assured of $1,000 per annum and a house.[153] The following year the cash assurance was made $1,200[154] but in 1934 it was lowered to the 1932 level.[155] In 1937 it was raised $100 and today financial security for the pastor is assurred by a minimum salary of

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149 MEC, XXV, ii, 205.
150 MEC, XIX, ii, 81.
151 MEC, XIX, i, 37.
152 MEC, XXIII, iii, 515.
153 MEC, XXIV, i, 428.
154 MEC, XXIV, ii, 228.
155 MEC, XXIV, iv, 642.

$1,100 and house.[156] While such is the minimum, salaries range as high as $3,600 with additional provisions for house on several of the charges. More adequate financial provisions were made during the period for the care of Conference dependents.

Not only has better financial security been provided but living conditions have been improved. Every charge has its parsonage and most of them are kept in a fair state of repair. As has been already mentioned the years of the present century provided church buildings which in many instances were designed and equipped to care not only for the Sunday Services of the church but to provide a seven-day-a-week program to minister to all the needs of men.

The days of the "horse and buggy" parson have passed and the present-day preacher is assisted in his work by the automobile and modern business methods. A concept of the present-day Methodist preacher of this era together with his place in the community may be gathered from the following.

> No class of men in our territory is more efficient in their work than the ministers. They have invested time, money, and life in their preparation. No class is doing more, or as much, for the world as the preachers of righteousness. We are proud of them and would find great pleasure in speaking of each one, noting his achievements. The faithful minister of the Gospel is the most trusted and loved man in the community where he serves. God

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156 MEC, XXV, ii, 257.

gives him the hearts of the people, and he leads them to divinely set goals.[157]

Most of the preachers are not only religious leaders but take an active interest in matters of civic and community well-being. As such every Methodist minister has become an ardent prohibitionist and has exerted himself efficiently to retard and defeat the progress of the liquor habit and industry. To be noted in their ability to stand in the face of economic adversity and to hold the Church steady in periods of such distress.

Among the ministers of this era are to be found doctors, inventors, authors, and one-time government employees. Of the latter, mention must be made of J. B. Warner who left a position which shortly promised to place him at the head of the United States Secret Service to come to the service of the Methodism of this area. In his days in the service of the government he had spent a night in the camp of the notorious Jesse James and while there secured such information which allowed him to effect the downfall of that desparado.

The ministry of Methodism was greatly supplemented in these years by the assistance rendered by a number of deaconesses who who worked throughout the area. Deaconess work was first introduced in 1901 when a rescue home was opened in Erie.[158] The

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157 MEC, XXII, i, 69.
158 MEC, XVI, ii, 76.

Deaconesses have served the Conference until the present day in different places and in varied capacities. They assisted churches in Warren,[159] Sharon,[160] New Castle,[161] Punxsutawney,[162] Ridgway[163] at various times. In 1910 the Irene Maitland Deaconess Home was established in New Castle[164] and since that time the work of these women has been chiefly in this vicinity. Here they have not only assisted in the regular services of the church but have conducted kindergarden and industrial classes for foreign born children and children of foreign parentage. Likewise they have helped in certain rural areas. During the war and immediate post-war years the work prospered but recently it has declined and for some time the work has been confined to the New Castle area. Nevertheless, while decreasing in importance this type of work is yet of considerable consequence to the Church. Too much cannot be said for the part done by these women in the bi-lingual missions and churches and in the poorer sections of the industrialized cities.

The foregoing having presented the events attending the growth and expansion of Methodism in the first thirty-eight years of the twentieth century; having considered proposed

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159 MEC, XVII, ii, 102.
160 MEC, XVII, ii, 102.
161 MEC, XVII, iii, 78.
162 MEC, XIX, i, 79.
163 MEC, XIX, i, 79.
164 MEC, XVIII, iii, 89.

changes in Conference boundaries, having reviewed the attitudes and activities of the Conference and the Church; having seen secular conditions in the area together with their effect upon the Methodism of the area; and having reviewed the ministry of Methodism in these years the present chapter is brought to a close and the historical survey of the life of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this area is brought to an end.

SUMMARY

The foregoing historical survey treating the Methodist Episcopal Church as it has existed in northwestern Pennsylvania has its foundation in the facts of primary historical records and such secondary evidences as have pertinent relationship to the subject. The inquiry has served to describe the condition of the territory in its earliest days together with its state at the time of the introduction of Methodism. The inhospitable environment and the unfriendliness of the inhabitants toward the new movement is described. Despite these circumstances and the attraction of new religious movements, persecution by the established faith, and the tendency of Methodism to confine itself to rural areas the new faith took root and grew strong. As the years moved on, as new settlers came, and as the natural resources were developed Methodism spread itself throughout the entire region and attracted steadily increasing numbers of individuals to itself. At length thousands gave their allegience to Methodism and it became a great conditioning factor upon the life, thought, and outlook of this portion of the Commonwealth. Its expansion was characterized by the revival and camp meeting and while emotional excess and physical effects often accompanied these mediums the passing years have evidenced a growing refinement in the evangelistic techniques of the Church. The

message of Methodism remains strongly evangelistic yet it recognizes the place of the social features of the gospel and the Methodism of this area has been remarkably free from disruption arising from theological controversy within its ranks.

The Methodism of this region did not confine its interests to the religious welfare of this area alone, but from its earliest days has manifest concern for the spiritual well-being of men throughout the world. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Church became interested in missions and throughout the years has displayed its concern for others. In missionary activities the Methodism of this area has taken a place of prominence in the Church at large and both men, women, and money from this region have been spent in spreading the gospel to people of other faiths and nations.

Neither did Methodism limit itself to the care of the spiritual needs of the life of man. Early it became interested in education. The Sunday School movement became an integral part of Methodism in its earliest years. Until the years of the depression of the 1930's this feature of the Church's program continued to grow and attained such widespread success that it threatened to hamper the work of the body which gave it nurture. Higher education likewise secured the patronage of the movement even in its early life and with courage and foresight the Church lent its support to a number of institutions for this purpose. Chief among these was Allegheny College

which, while the sole surviving institution of higher learning connected with the Conference has grown, expanded, and improved in the years of its affiliation with Methodism until today it ranks high among like institutions of the nation.

Certain social afflictions have commanded the attentions of Methodism in these parts. Early it became interested in temperance and since that time its leaders have been fearless and outspoken in their denunciation and attack upon the liquor industry. It has also taken a stand against tobacco yet this aspect of temperance has never commanded the activity occasioned by the other feature of the movement. More recently the Church has raised its voice against many of the practices of industrial exploitation of man, resources, and foreign nations. It has condemned war and those who profit by it and denounced every social evil which has come to its attention.

During the years of the twentieth century portion of the study there appears a larger emphasis upon the social and recreational functions of the Church and Methodism has sought to care for these, together with the spiritual aspects of religion, through societies of various types for men, women, and young people.

The religious press has always had the support of the Church and it has done much to promote its welfare.

Secular conditions have always had an effect upon the Methodism of the area. As early as 1812 the effects of the

War of that year was noted upon the movement. Abolitionism in the area acted upon Methodism and in turn was stimulated by the Church although such a process threatened the welfare of the Church at the time. Methodism was likewise instrumental in the formulation of public opinion in regard to slavery and the Civil War found the sentiments of the Church on the side of the north and the Church felt the stress of the war in many ways. Depressions came from time to time and served to retard the movement. Especially was this true of those of more recent years yet the years of plenty had more than a compensating effect upon the welfare of Methodism.

The rising tide of industrialism seriously distressed the interests of the Church in rural areas but did much to strengthen it in city areas. The exploitation of natural resources and the influx of immigrants to this area also had their effects.

The World War had a marked effect upon the spiritual and material prosperity of the Church and certain phases of the movement disappeared after the conflict and other aspects of Methodism were seriously weakened by it.

Despite the imprint of secular affairs it is to be noted that no single event or combination of circumstances has served to seriously impair the welfare of the Methodism of the area.

The leadership of Methodism has been drawn from many sources. In addition to Methodism of the area several nationalities and denominations have furnished the men who have served

the cause and a portion have come from the parsonages of Methodism. Often these men have been lacking in formal education and social refinement yet their devotion to the task of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ made them willing to endure hardships and in many ways made up for their lack of other qualifications. Not a few of their lives were colorful and some of the finest leadership of the Church has come from this area. As the years have passed living and working conditions have been improved and their work has been supplemented in many ways. Today they are better prepared and better paid than at any other time in the history of the Church in the region.

For a period of one hundred and forty-three years Methodism has lived in this area. During that time it has been an ever growing influence for the good and much of the best that has come from this region has felt the conditioning influence of Methodism. Today as the Methodist Church of America commences its great task and the Methodist Episcopal Church becomes an institution of the past there exist great opportunities for Methodism of the future in this area for the Church of yesterday laid well the foundation stones of the great movement in this area on which the Church of the future may construct great things.

TABLES

TABLE I

CHURCHES AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP*

1855-1938

YEAR	CHURCHES	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
1855	---**	9,300
1860	150	11,700
1865	196	13,800
1870	187	18,300
1875	263	22,100
1880	273	23,200
1885	306	24,900
1890	326	28,800
1895	330	35,000
1900	308	37,100
1905	395	39,800
1910	384	43,700
1915	316	55,700
1920	369	57,200
1925	328	59,300
1930	337	57,700
1935	341	62,300
1938	342	62,700

*Computed to nearest hundred.

**Figures unavailable.

TABLE II

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP[1]

1860-1938

YEAR	SUNDAY SCHOOLS	SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP[2]
1860	235	15,400
1865	259	21,100
1870	296	22,900
1875	334	28,000
1880	319	29,500
1885	336	30,500
1890	354	33,900
1895	386	42,000[3]
1900	391	39,000
1905	308	42,500
1910	386	50,700
1915	385	73,000
1920	360	65,400
1925	341	70,200
1930	321	63,100
1935	337	62,300
1938	331	56,200

1. Computed to nearest hundred.

2. Includes, scholars, officers and teachers.

3. Statistics for cradle roll and primary departments included after this date.

TABLE III

EPWORTH LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP[1]

1910-1938

YEAR	LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP
1910	11,000
1915	11,000
1920	7,900
1925	7,300
1930	7,200
1935	7,500
1938	5,600

1. Computed to nearest hundred,

GRAPHS

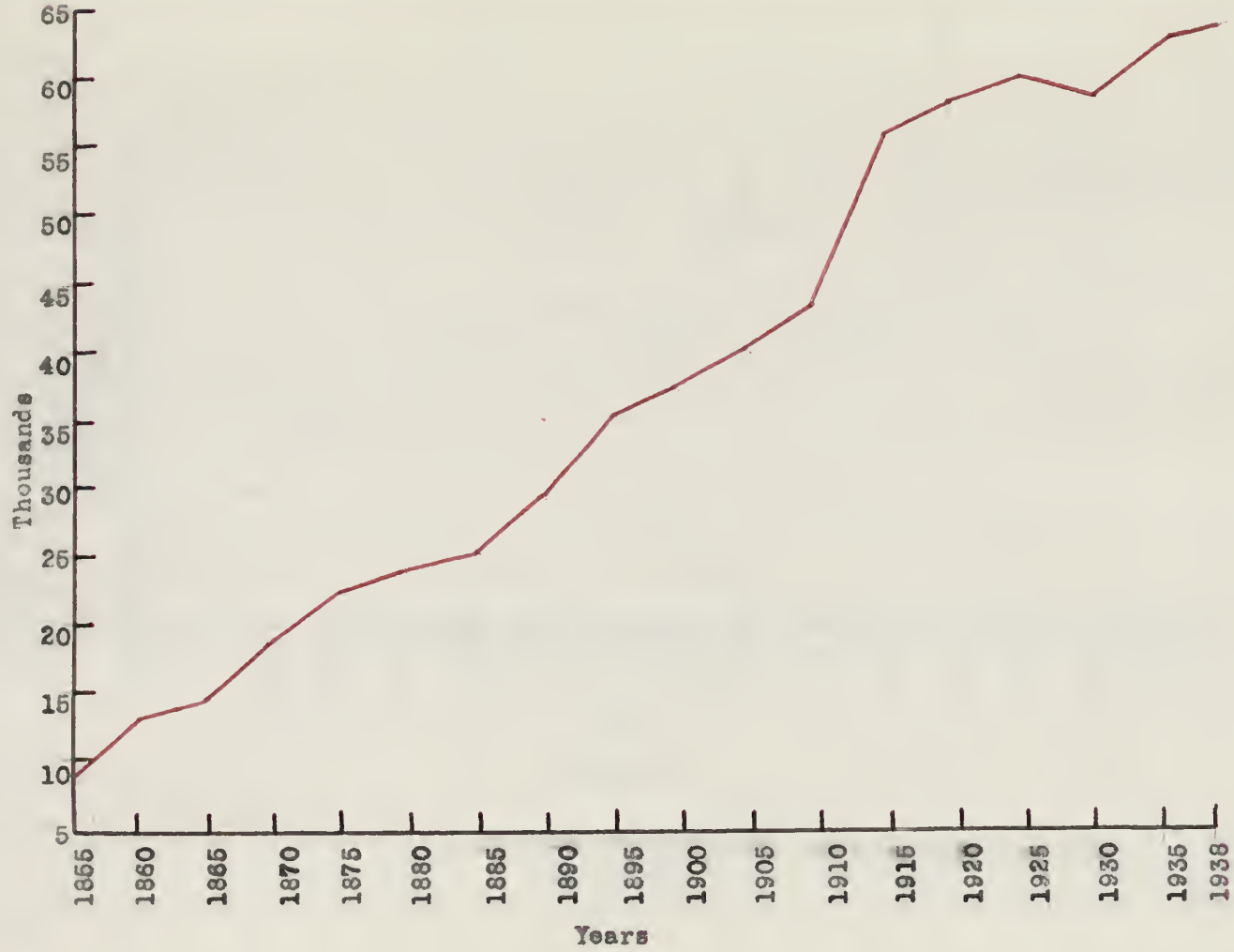


FIGURE 1

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
1855--1938

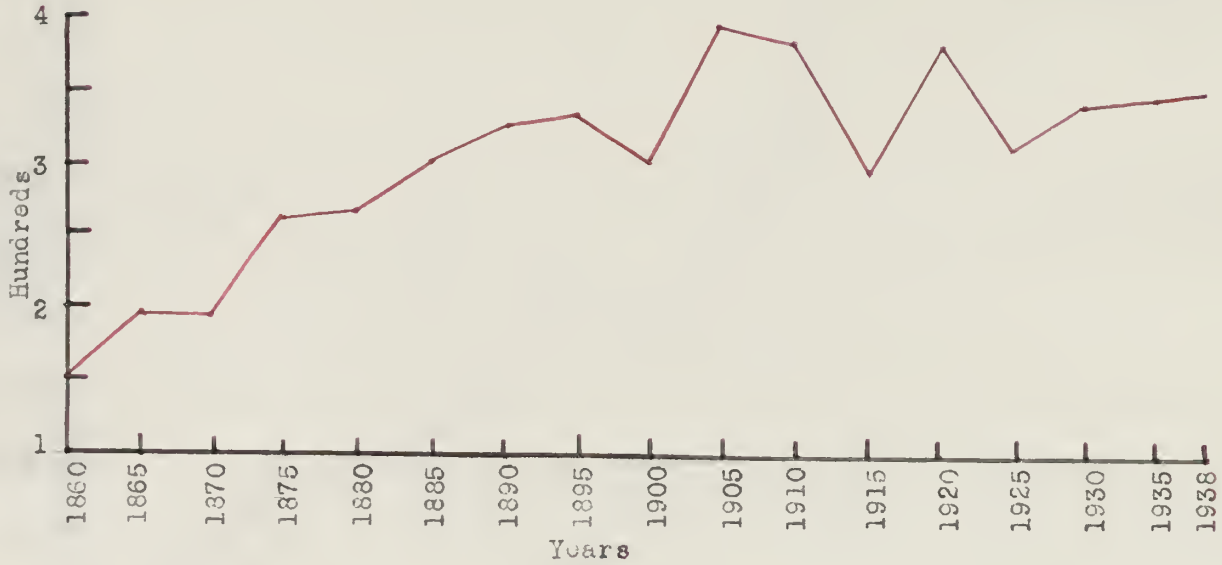


FIGURE 2

NUMBER OF CHURCHES
1860--1938

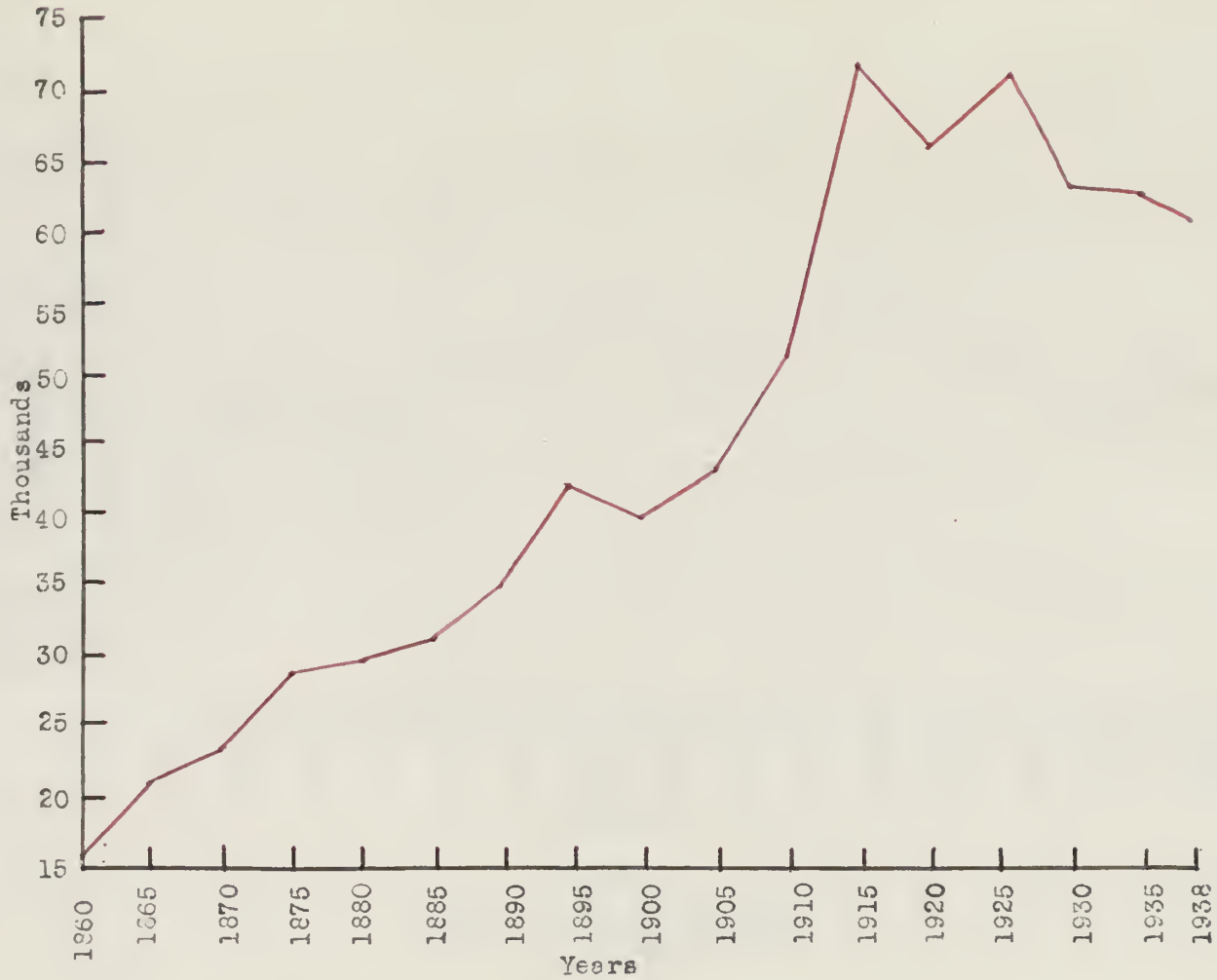


FIGURE 5

SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP
1860--1938

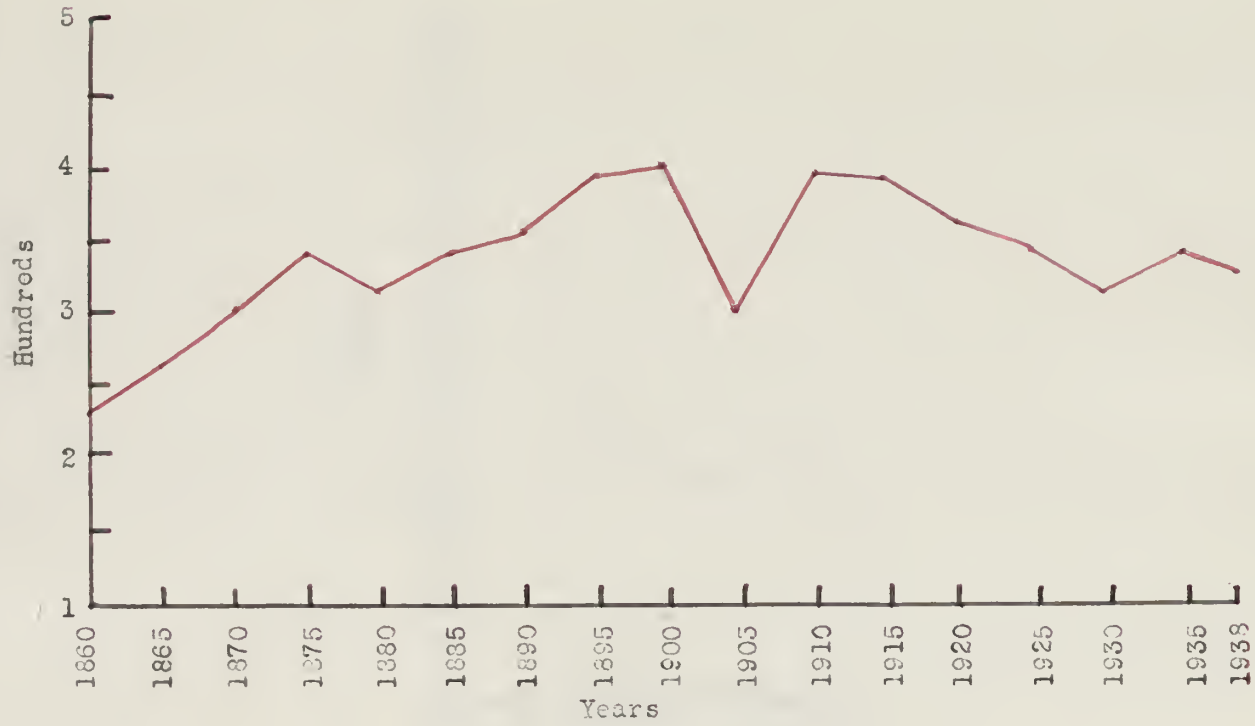


FIGURE 4

NUMBER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS
1860--1938

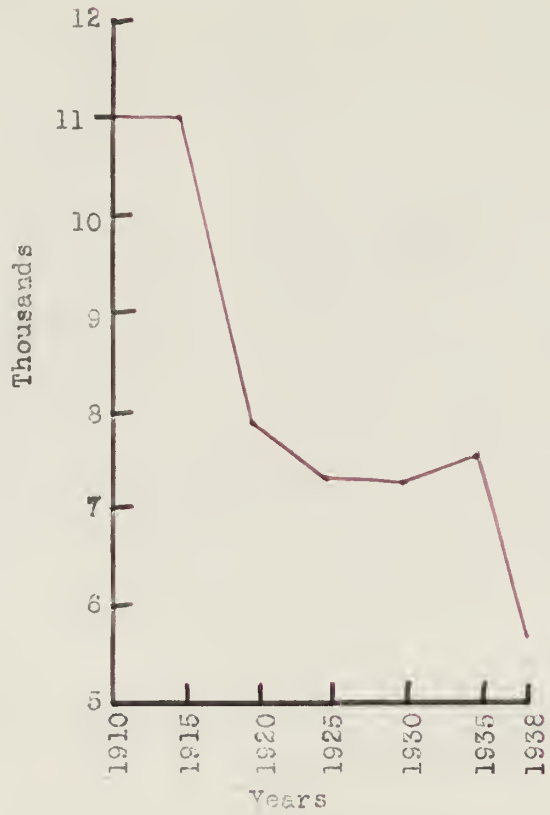
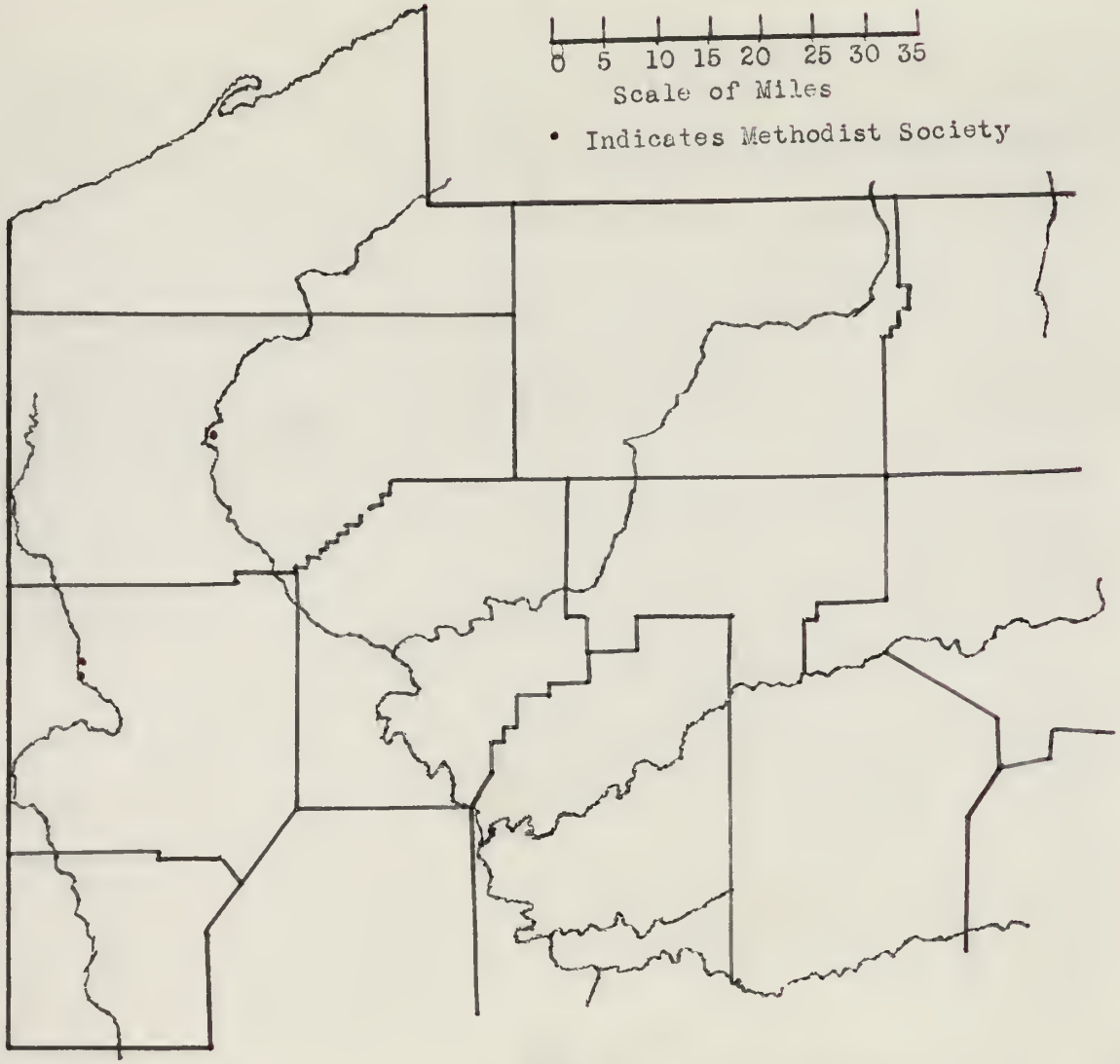


FIGURE 5

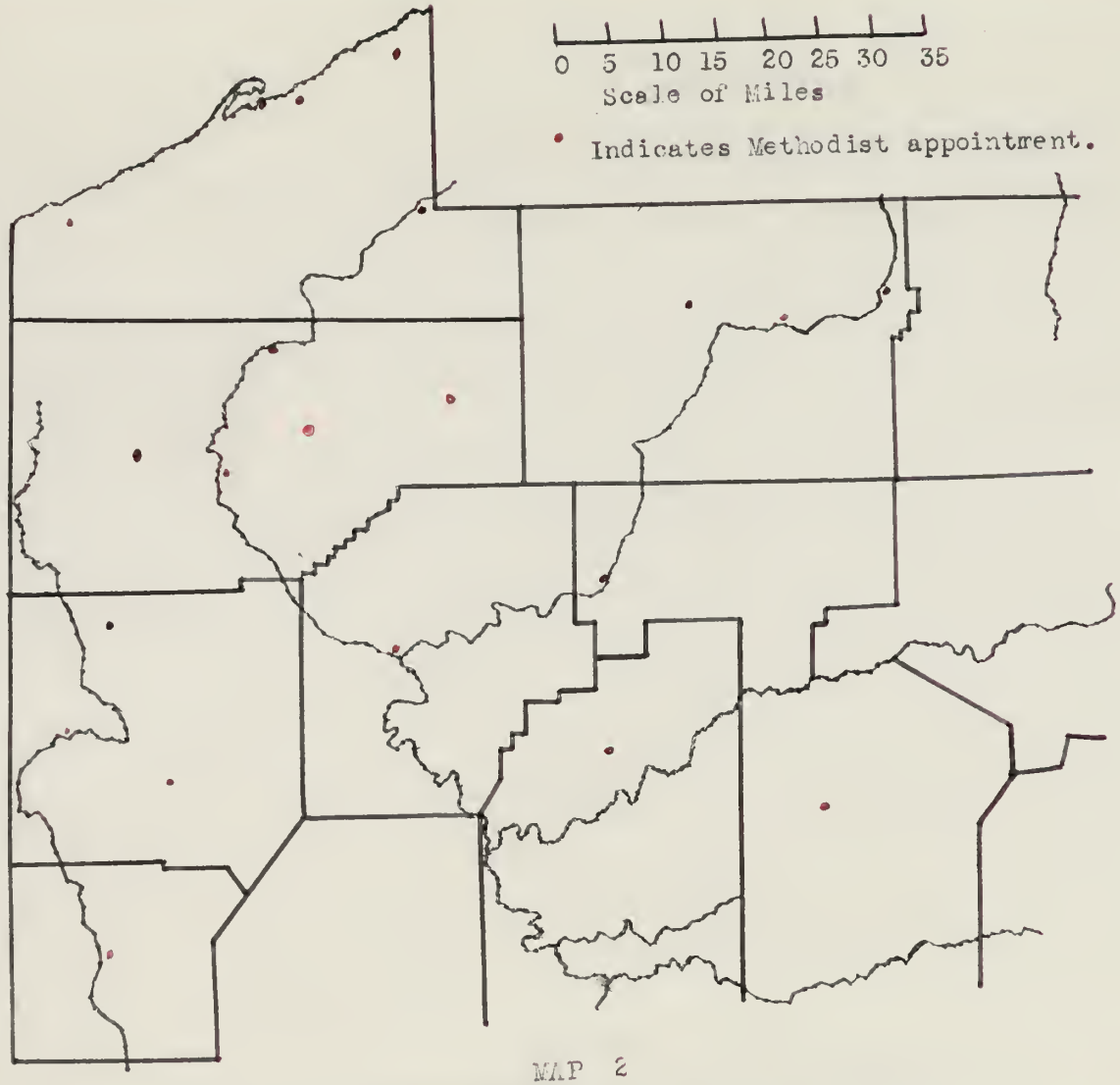
EPWORTH LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP
1910--1938

MAPS



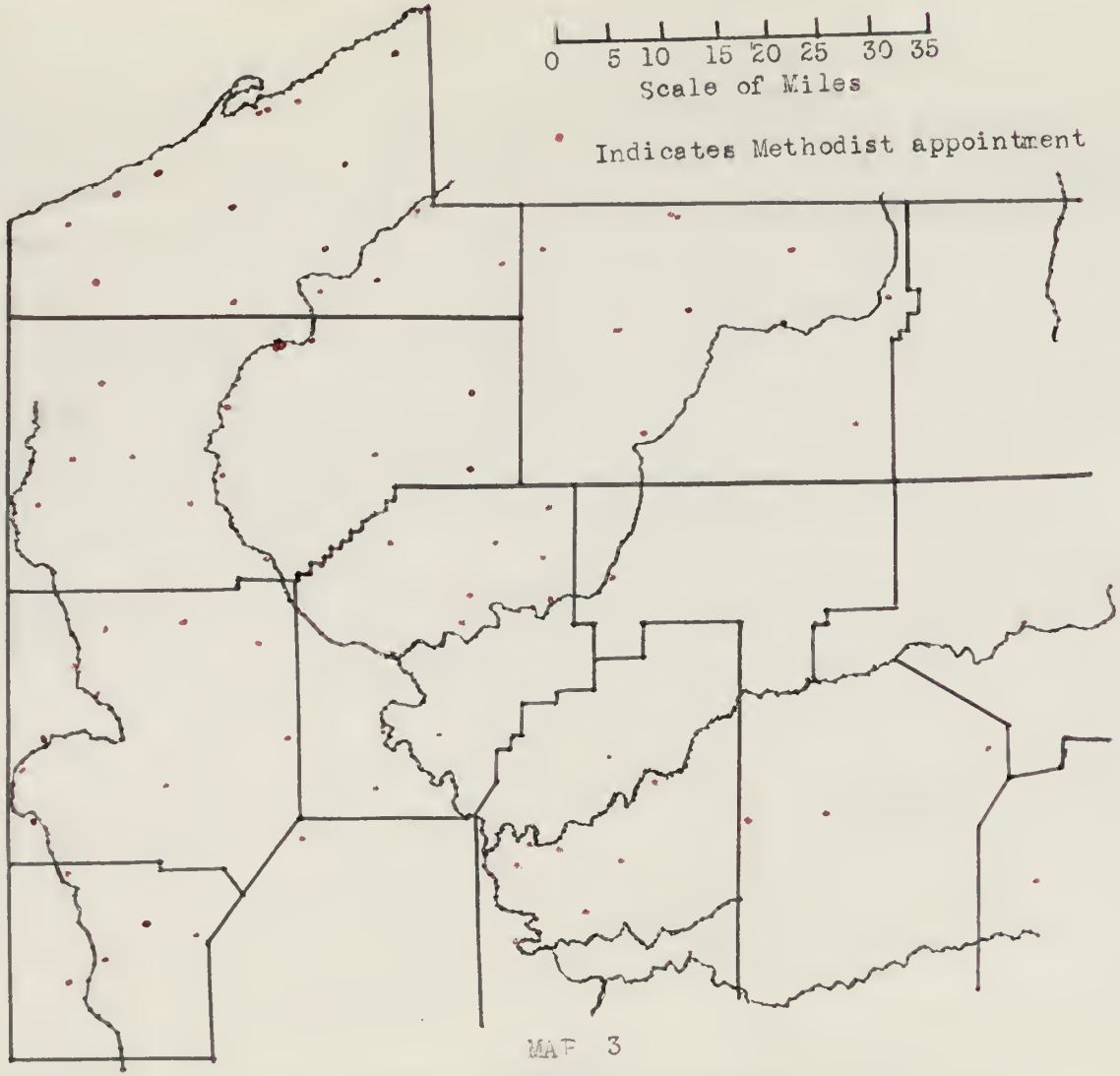
MAP 1

METHODIST SOCIETIES IN NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
IN 1800



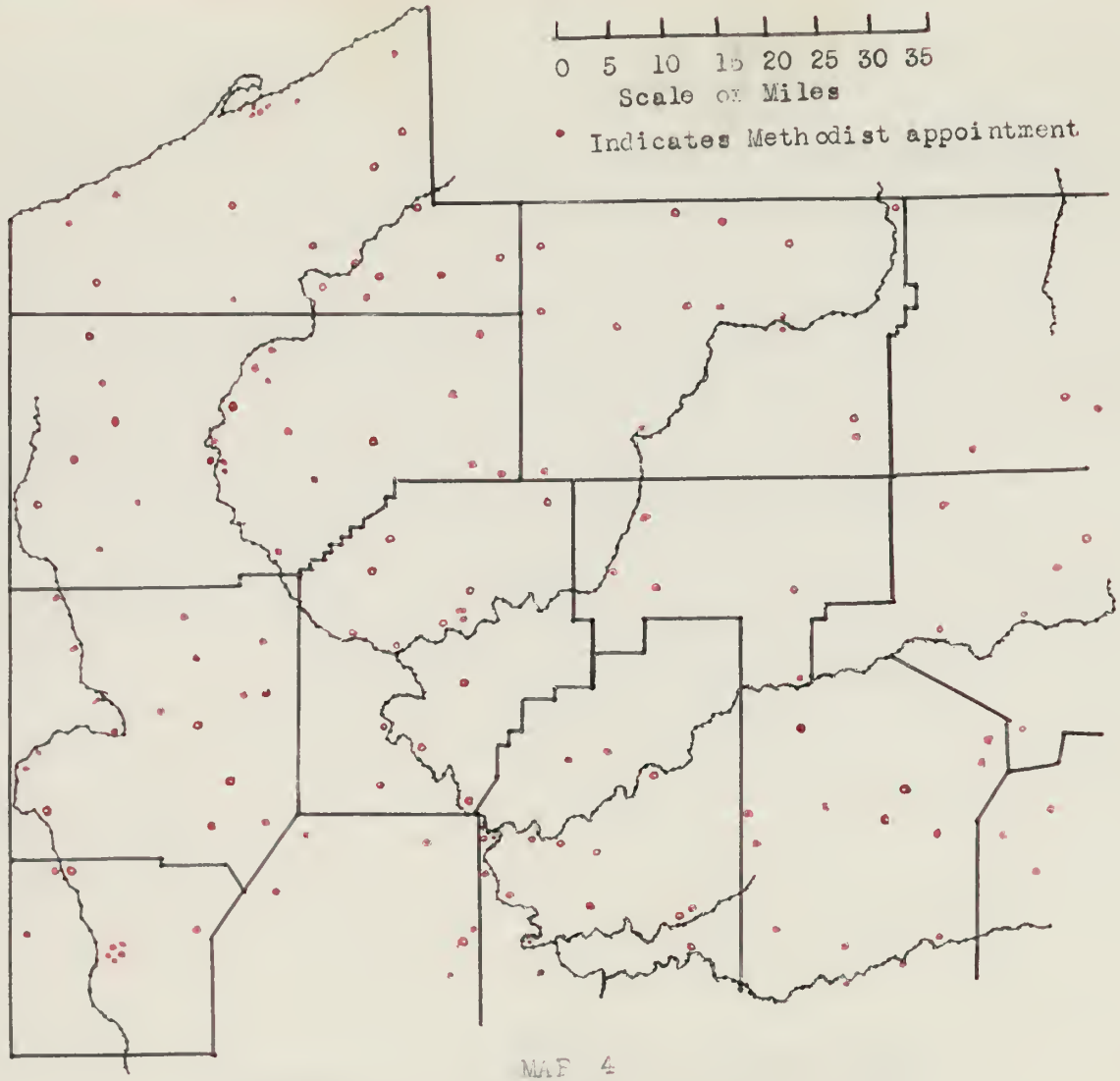
MAP 2

APPOINTMENTS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1836



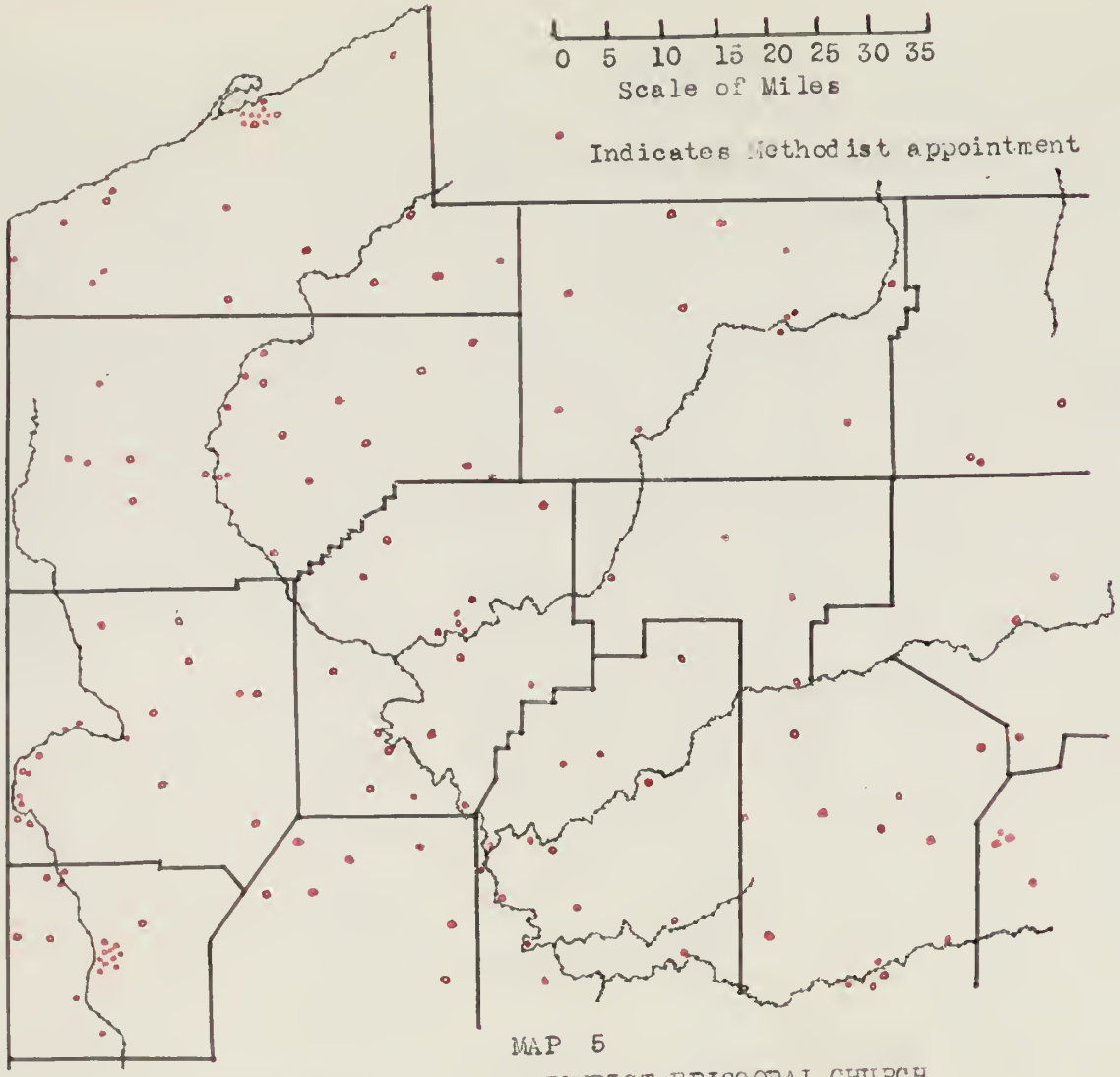
MAP 3

APPOINTMENTS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1866



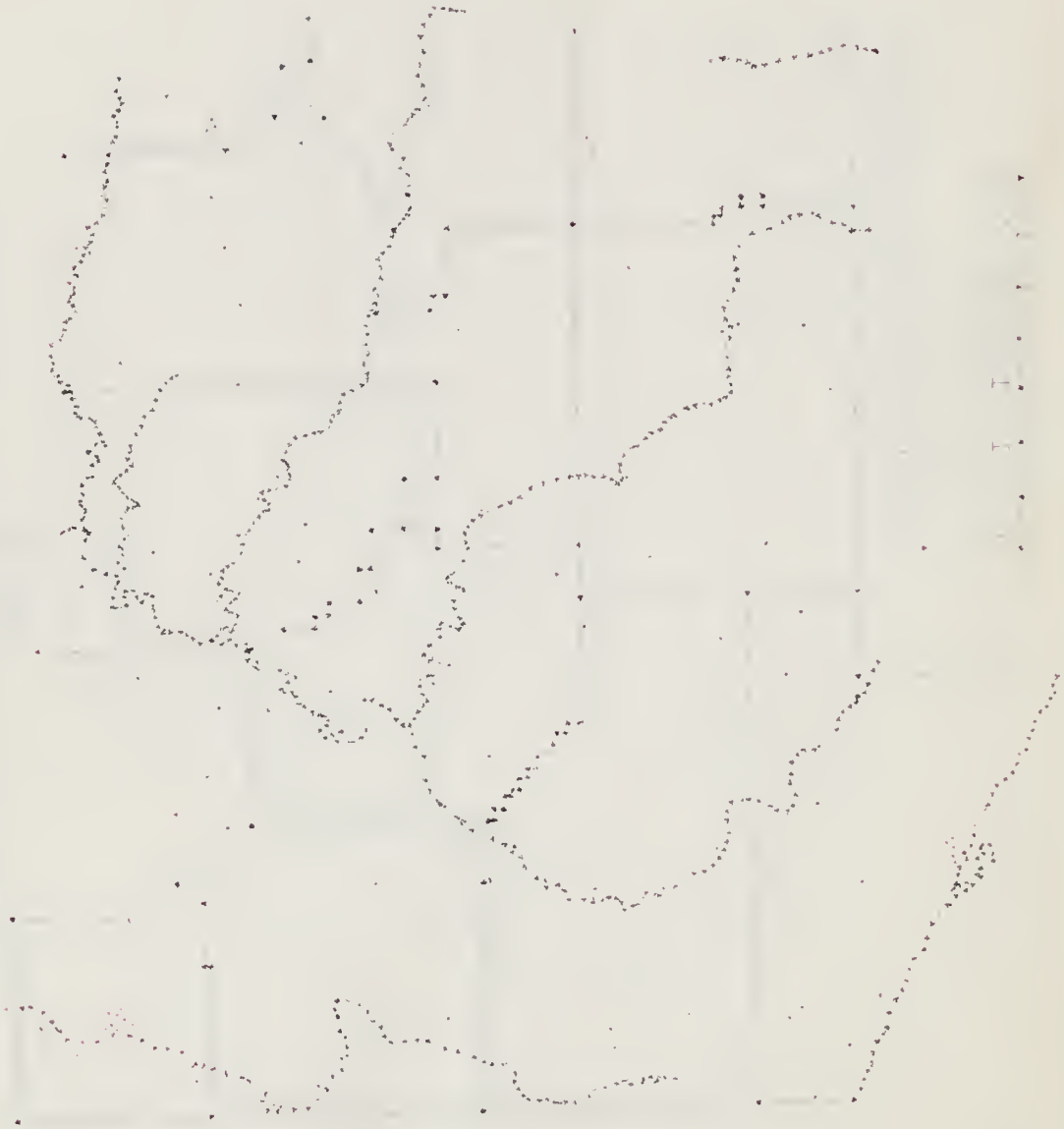
MAP 4

APPOINTMENTS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1900



MAP 5

APPOINTMENTS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1938



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Number 4: Ravenna, Ohio: Lyman W. Hall, 1863.
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